A Printed People: Journalism and Jewish Consciousness in Nineteenth Century British Jewry

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A Printed People: Journalism and Jewish Consciousness in Nineteenth Century British Jewry

Celeste Marcus

AN HONORS THESIS

In

History

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Introduction:

Shopkeepers, Scholars, Robbers and Rabbis

From 1841 to 1848, a community in transition created *The Voice of Jacob*, the first Jewish newspaper in Britain. Jacob Franklin, its founder and the editor in chief for five of the organ’s seven years, established a publication whose pages were peppered with many different sorts of characters. Its authors had contradictory theories. They disagreed about the definitions of patriotism, Jewish loyalty, and religious and social progress. While it certainly promoted rigorous study and careful philosophical thought, not all of its readers were intellectuals, and not all of its intellectual articles were written by scholars or religious authorities. Broad statements can be made about its political and social allegiances. It can be said, for example, that the paper was a sentry of tradition and an enemy of reform, though the opposite has also been argued.¹ There are certainly sentiments in its pages that promote reform and condemn reactionary traditionalism in religious belief and life.

Franklin insisted on complicated answers to fundamental questions. If he had a preeminent purpose it was to create a public symposium in which interested parties could contribute meaningful material about any subject related to Jews and Judaism. He did not ask whether intellectual and spiritual seriousness had anything to do with everyday life. He assumed that they did and filled his paper’s pages with a mix of both, allowing readers to draw their own conclusions. Franklin was trained as an optician and

worked as an auditor. When he first established the paper, he had intended to serve as publisher not editor. Fate had other plans, and he was forced to invent an editorial philosophy with no relevant experience. He was not an intellectual, but he was an intellectually minded layman with high commitments and gumption.

_The Voice of Jacob_ does not fit neatly into most theories of English Jewish modernization. Jacob Katz’s _Out of the Ghetto_, the father of historical studies of Jewish modernization, established the German-centric paradigm which subsequent historians at first reinforced and then picked apart. According to Katz’s view, Moses Mendelssohn set German Jewry on the intellectual path “out of the ghetto.” Mendelssohn provided his community with a model for how to think themselves into modernity. The Reform movement in Germany, according to Katz, was one of Mendelssohn’s many intellectual offspring and reform movements around the world used Berlin as a blueprint for intellectual evolution. This narrative places German Jewry at the center of Jewish modernization, and all other Jewish communities on a spectrum with Germany at one end and intellectual stagnation at the other. Historians like Ira Katznelson and Pierre Birnbaum have since demonstrated that Katz’s view demands an unrealistic “flattening of variations” which ignores the disparate conditions unique to each Jewish community.

The early study of European Jewish history calcified the myth that Jewish modernization in English was insignificant for two primary reasons. This myth was based on the assumption that the anti-Semitism in England was not aggressive enough,

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and the intellectual vivacity of the community was not impressive enough for these Jews to be studied.\textsuperscript{4} English anti-Semitism was mild, and its intellectual life was dull, so why pay attention?\textsuperscript{5} Jewish historians who did choose to focus on England were conspicuously defensive - for example, Cecil Roth’s valedictory presidential address to the Jewish Historical Society of England in 1968 was entitled \textit{Why Anglo-Jewish History}?\textsuperscript{6} Todd Endelman points out that the fact that Roth felt the need to dedicate an address to that question reveals more about the field than the content of Roth’s defense.\textsuperscript{7}

On the subject of subtle anti-Jewish prejudice, it is true that English anti-Semitism was nonviolent and undramatic. This was a soft bigotry which, like so many aspects of British identity, manifested itself subtly. The fact that it was subtle, however does not make it insignificant. On the contrary, it is often true that the defining features of a culture are amorphous and inexplicit, more a question of tone and attitude. Violent anti-Semitism is unambiguous. It is proud of its prejudice. Soft anti-Semitism, which manifests in modernity as it has throughout history, is equally real but not overt.

\textsuperscript{4}Todd Endelman is the William Haber Professor of Modern Jewish History at the University of Michigan, and the director of the university’s Center for Judaic Studies. Dorothy Bauhoff, “Endelman, Todd M.” The\textit{Encyclopaedia Judaica}, edited by Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, 2nd ed., vol 6. p. 403. The term “Anti-Semitism” was popularized by German journalist Wilhem Marr in 1879. Marr identified as the Patriarch of anti-Semitism and coined the term to refer to his own movement. The term has since been appropriated by scholars of Jewish history. The concept of phenomenon of anti-Semitism predates its originator by at least several centuries and is therefore useful in a study of Jewish-gentile relations throughout history. Moshe Zimmerman, \textit{Wilhelm Marr: the Patriarch of Antisemitism} (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).
\textsuperscript{5} David Cannadine wrote that British Jewish history was “little more than a bland and lukewarm chronicle... Neither very interesting nor very exciting.” “Cousinhood” \textit{London Review of Books}, 27 (1989) 10-12.
\textsuperscript{6} Cecil Roth (1899-1970) served as a reader in Jewish Studies at Oxford University from 1939 to 1964. He then moved to Jerusalem and served as a visiting professor at Bar-Ilan University in Tel Aviv but resigned shortly after his appointment. He became the first editor in chief of the Encyclopaedia Judaica in 1966, a post he held till his death. He is known for his prolific scholarship and is said to have written more than 779 items. Vivian David Lipman. “Roth, Cecil.” \textit{Encyclopaedia Judaica}, edited by Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, 2nd Ed., vol. 17, p. 479-480.
\textsuperscript{7} Todd Endelman, \textit{The Jews of Britain: 1656 to 2000} (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2002), I.
Studying England’s subtle anti-Semitism is essential because it influenced how English Jews related to their country and citizenships. The method of detecting characteristics which are omnipresent but not articulated is fundamental to the study of English Jewish history.

Todd Endelman uses a similar technique to dispute the German-centric narrative of English Jewish modernization. In *The Jews of Britain; 1656 to 2000* and *The Jews of Georgian England, 1714 – 1830: Tradition and Change in a Liberal Society* he argued that English Jewish modernization was primarily a social story, rather than an intellectual one. British Jews did not philosophize their way out of the medieval period, they drifted slowly away from tradition while English liberalism softened Christian hostility towards Jews. Slackening of strict traditionalism loosened both societies. The membranes separating Jews from gentiles, and gentiles from Jews became increasingly porous. These two evolutions permeated English culture effectively because they occurred organically. They were not dictated, they were the natural development of myriad forces none of which were self-conscious. The social shift caused the intellectual shift, not the other way around.

Endelman argued that a study of the quotidiant details of English Jewish life, and how those details shifted over time, reveal more about Jewish modernization than any particular figure or movement can. According to him, all cultural evolutions occur in the

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9 This is another contribution to the Great Man Theory debate which began in the nineteenth century with figures like Thomas Carlyle. Carlyle claimed that “Universal History. the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here.” Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*. (London: J. Fraser, 1841), 1. Carlyle’s analysis inspired critics like Herbert Spencer to argue that Carlyle’s Great Men were nothing more than products of their social contexts. He wrote “Before he can re-make his society, his society must make him….. If there is to be anything like a real explanation of these changes, it must be sought in that
social realm before they occur in the intellectual realm. Great men do not create history, history creates great men. He argues that all of history should be studied from the ground up, beginning with the minute, almost imperceptible changes that make up a greater transformation. This point is part of a broader view of Jewish history: Endelman argues that, just as England did not require a thought leader to pull Jews towards progress, no Jewish community did. Katz was doubly wrong: Jewish communities around the world did not model themselves on German intellectuals and German Jews themselves did not either. Progressive practice birthed progressive thought. Studying outstanding figures rather than ordinary ones may be simpler after all, because they identify themselves and their meanings explicitly. But, Endelman insists, this method is misleading. The heroes of Endelman’s history were the businessmen, bankers, peddlers, and pugilists former historians ignored. Endelman felt compelled to argue that these ordinary people were anti-intellectual because they had no Great Man among them spinning philosophical treatises out of their practice.

David Ruderman corroborated Endelman’s critique of the German-centric model of Jewish history, but disputed Endelman’s anti-intellectual description of English Jewry.10 Ruderman demonstrated that English Jewry had a unique and distinctive intellectual culture. He offers examples of preeminent figures like David Levi and Abraham ben Naphtali Tang, as well as smatterings of intellectually oriented, ordinary

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individuals whose broader influence was negligible but who demonstrate an important concept: the intellectual dispositions of ordinary individuals are a significant part of a nation’s history. Among the fundamental analytic tools Ruderman provides readers is the identification of translation as a central part of English Jewish modernization. British Jews were uniquely monolingual, and the translation of holy texts from traditional languages into English was paramount in the modern period. Translation changed the way that English Jews related to and conceived of their tradition. Language, not a particular text written in a particular language, but language itself affected all of English Jewry.11 It is a commonplace that language has the powerful capacity to shape thought. Its centrality in the history of The Voice of Jacob effectively demonstrates that a force can be intellectually significant while also being derived from ordinary people. Endelman is correct to focus on laymen, but he is wrong to insist that they are necessarily thoughtless, or that their thought is insignificant. If their habits and social norms matter, their ideas do as well.12

Ruderman’s book is a study of the eighteenth century and early nineteenth century Jewish community in England. The Voice of Jacob begins roughly fifty years after David Levi’s death. The subject of translation does feature periodically in The Voice of Jacob directly, but the concept of translation is relevant in every issue. The

11 In a paper entitled, The Origins of Cultural History, delivered at a conference at the University of Adelaide, Isaiah Berlin identified Vico as the first person to articulate the concept that languages are unique and incommensurate: “The Italian humanist Bruni said in the early fifteenth century: ‘anything which can be said in Greek can be said in Latin too.’ (cf Vico and Herder, page 139.) This, for Vico, is absolutely false. What you say in one language you cannot say in another.” Isaiah Berlin, Vico, Voltaire and the Beginnings of Cultural History. (Adelaide, 1975).
12 In his introduction to the second edition of The Jews of Georgian England, Endelman, citing Ruderman, concedes that there were particular intellectually minded individuals in England at this time, but insists that they were countercultural and so insignificant. introduction, xi.
entire organ is an attempt to translate a traditional way of life into a modern one.\textsuperscript{13} Continuing the work where Ruderman’s heroes left off, it has preserved the voices of a community as enlightened as any community wrestling with tradition can hope to be, doing its best to think and live itself into the future.

Reading any issue of \textit{The Voice of Jacob} in its entirety provides a window into this community. On the first page, the reader will likely discover a long essay on a weighty subject like, for example, the implications of emancipation for British Jews. The essay might agitate for rapid emancipation or it might warn that emancipation will lead to assimilation depending on the issue the reader happened to pick up. A few columns later, the dissertation of the weekly Torah portion will provide a reader with a sense of how lay Englishmen read and understood the Bible. A letter, submitted by a hard-working Jewish shopkeeper, beseeching wealthy Jewish readers to patronize Jewish shops instead of Christian ones will hint at the strained dynamic between the Jewish rich and poor. The litany of pithy, occasionally alarming notices in the \textit{Foreign and Colonial intelligence} section will remind readers that contemporary Jews in other countries endured violent intolerance. If the issue is from the second volume, the ad section on the final page will likely feature a message from Messrs. E. & E. Emanuel seeking a young Jewish man to serve as an apprentice in their Jewelry shop. A message “to advertises” in the bottom right hand corner will declare “the widely extended, and in some respects, peculiar circulation of this paper, renders it an eligible medium of communication for Advertisers” above the terms of subscription, and printing

\textsuperscript{13} On the subject of translation, \textit{The Voice of Jacob} refers to new translations of Jewish stories from Hebrew into English in Issue One Volume One; an essay entitled \textit{Why Has Not the Oral Law Been Translated} in Volume One, Issue twenty-four; a proposal for a new corrected translation of the Bible in Volume Two, Issue Forty-six, forty-eight, fifty-seven and fifty-eight. There are also examples of Western texts translated into Biblical Hebrew in Volume One, Issue twenty-one and twenty-nine.
information. This convening of shopkeepers, scholars, rich and poor Jews is the script of Jewish modernization in England, and a rich, thoughtful and even vivacious portrait of a community in its totality.
CHAPTER I

A Community in Its Totality

The Voice of Jacob, the first Jewish periodical in Britain, was founded in London in 1841, several hundred years after the first Jewish community in England was established in 1066. Despite persecution, this original community grew prosperous and contributed significantly to the English economy. It was destroyed in 1290, when King Edward I evicted the roughly two thousand Jews who had remained in England despite mounting intolerance over the preceding century. Conversos (Spanish Jews who had been forced to convert to Christianity) involved in trade settled in London in the 1630’s, stealthily preserving vestiges of Jewish tradition despite their conversion. The secret Jewish community they developed was the ancestor of modern English Jewry.

Official readmission was never granted, though many associate Jewish reentry with Oliver Cromwell in 1656. Millenarian Protestants believed that the conversion of Jews to Christianity was a necessary prerequisite for the second coming of Jesus and

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15Endelman, The Jews of Britain, 18.
started to agitate for readmission in the late sixteenth century. Millenarian pressure to convert Jews crescendoed in the 1640s, when the belief that England would play a primary role in hastening the final days grew. Throughout that decade ecclesiastical authority was dramatically reduced, and the church’s tremendous power to censor, educate and adjudicate in England deteriorated. Unorthodox views proliferated with greater freedom than ever before. In this climate the belief in the impending mass conversion of the Jews gained wide appeal.

Amsterdam Sephardic Jews, foremost among them Menasseh Ben Israel, heard of the growing pro-Jewish sentiment in England. Menasseh became the unofficial representative of Amsterdam Jewry, and petitioned Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell for readmission. It is widely acknowledged that Cromwell favored readmission, partially for economic reasons but also because of his own millenarianism. His initial strategy was to persuade parliament to permit Jewish resettlement. When it became clear that the motion would not receive majority support, Cromwell decided that, because the edict in 1290 had been a unilateral ruling by the king, Cromwell could choose to readmit the Jews unilaterally as well. Despite Cromwell’s support, an official retraction of the 1290 expulsion was never issued. Still, Jewish resettlement in the latter end of the seventeenth century occurred informally. British culture was more conducive to inexplicit, steady progress than to overt reforms, “it shunned theoretical systems and philosophical abstractions, preferring instead an empirical, piecemeal approach.”

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the time William of Orange became king in 1688 a small, explicitly Jewish community was incubating in London. Under William’s reign, wealthy Sephardic Jews from Amsterdam were invited to settle in his capital. Ashkenazi Jews soon followed, and The Great Synagogue, an Ashkenazi institution and the first synagogue in London, was erected in 1690. Bevis Marks, the first Sephardic synagogue, was built in 1701, fifty-two years before the Jew Bill granted Jews permission to naturalize as British citizens.

Over the next hundred years the Sephardic and Ashkenazic communities continued to grow, developing separate cultural institutions and rabbinical leadership, though subject to the same strained British philo-semitism. In this period, because of a confluence of factors, England was dramatically more hospitable to Jews than neighboring countries. British liberalism and tolerance bred a culture in which Jews did not suffer the dramatic, violent expressions of anti-Semitism perpetrated in neighboring European countries. British anti-Semitism did exist, but it was expressed through social exclusion and distaste not violent oppression. British prejudice, like British progress, was a subtle but ubiquitous force.

David Nieto, who became the haham (spiritual leader) of the Spanish Portuguese community in 1701, was the foremost Jewish intellectual in England at that time. His secular education and powerful intellect earned him celebrity, though he was also

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21 Nieto studied medicine at the University of Padua. His secular education granted him access to the secular academic world and he corresponded with notable contemporary Christian intellectuals - something that contemporary Ashkenazi rabbis could not do as they were not given secular educations. Nieto was occupied primarily with the specific issues of the Sephardic community, and he dedicated a great deal of effort to defending rabbinic authority. His most important work, Matteh Dan (Rod of Dan) published in 1714, was a pamphlet defending Jewish oral law which has been reprinted multiple times and remains part of the orthodox Jewish intellectual canon. Endelman, The Jews of Britain, 63.
22Endelman, The Jews of Britain, 51.
23Ibid, 32.
24Ibid, 2. For more about the complex nature of British philo-semitism see chapter 3.
accused of Spinozist heresy by members of his own congregation.\textsuperscript{26} Two years after Nieto’s election, Aaron Hart became rabbi of the Great Synagogue, which has led some to consider him the first chief rabbi of the Ashkenazic community - a role which was not officially established until the nineteenth century. Hart served until his death in 1756, however, the London Ashkenazic community was not unified beneath a single chief rabbi in his lifetime, so his role was not analogous to Nieto’s.\textsuperscript{27} During Hart’s tenure a small community broke off from The Great Synagogue and formed the Hambro Synagogue in 1725.\textsuperscript{28} This was despite virulent opposition from the leadership of the Great Synagogue which feared that the schism would cause divisions within the community, and that their Christian neighbors would consider public displays of disunity uncivilized. Their remonstrations were ineffectual – so much so that twenty-five years later The New Synagogue, another offshoot, was established in Houndsditch.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{26} Katz, \textit{The Jews in the History of England}, 196. This happened the year after Nieto arrived in London. One congregant, Joshua Zarfati, accused Nieto of preaching Spinozan pantheism. The matter was eventually resolved, though it is barometrically significant that members of the Spanish Portuguese Community were sensitive to such a charge.

\textsuperscript{27} Endelman, \textit{The Jews of Britain}, 52.

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid, 210.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid, 53.
Hart Lyon replaced Aaron Hart as rabbi of the Great Synagogue in 1757.\textsuperscript{30} Disgusted by the lax observance and religious ignorance of his congregants, Lyon accepted a position in Halberstadt in 1763.\textsuperscript{31} He was replaced in London by David Tevele Schiff the following February.\textsuperscript{32} Born in Frankfurt in 1791, Schiff had been the

\begin{flushright}
\textit{Figure 2. Solomon Hirschell, 1808, College of Charleston Libraries.}
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\textsuperscript{31} Katz, \textit{The Jews in the History of England}, 259. Rumor has it then, when asked why he was leaving London, Hart answered that it was because that question was the first religious inquiry he had received here. Cecil Roth, \textit{The Great Synagogue}, 1690-1940. (London: E. Goldston, 1950), 121.

student of the chief rabbi in Frankfurt, but moved to London after Lyon’s departure. He too was disappointed with his congregation (and his salary), and spent much of his career trying to secure a different post to no avail. He died in London in 1791.

Solomon Hirschell replaced Schiff twelve years after the latter’s death. Hirschell was Hart Lyon’s son, and was born in London in 1762. He was three years old when his father secured a position in Halberstadt and the family left England for Germany. Hirschell applied for the position of rabbi of the Great Synagogue while serving as rabbi of Prenzlau in Prussia and was elected in 1802. By this time the number of Ashkenazi Londoners had outstripped Sephardim, and the three extent Ashkenazi synagogues had begun to work together. Due to these developments Hirschell is considered the first Chief Rabbi of Ashkenazi Britons. He was commonly known as ‘chief rabbi of the German and Polish Jews in England.’ Ashkenazim throughout Britain and the colonies directed questions of Jewish law to him. The secular press called him “the high priest” of London Jews. This structural unity came at the same time that ideological divides, particularly over the question of religious reform, deepened.

Ashkenazic Jews from Holland, Poland and the German states emigrated to England in large fluxes during the latter end of the eighteenth century. Their arrival, and the anti-Semitism that caused them to leave eastern Europe, was a recurring theme.

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34 Katz, The Jews in the History of England, 278. Like Lyon, Schiff also complained about the state of Jewish observance and ignorance in London. He wrote, “I have no pupil and not even any one to whom I can speak on Talmudic subjects.” Charles Duchinsky The Rabbinate of the Great Synagogue, London, from 1756-1842. (Farnborough, 1971) 21-23.
36 Endelman, The Jews of Britain, 3.
in the *Foreign and Colonial Intelligence* columns of *The Voice of Jacob*. The foundations of the Jewish community in London were young compared to those in other European countries. This nascency, coupled with the fact that so many members were recent immigrants, meant that there were fewer structural impediments to the reformation of Jewish tradition in the wake of modernization.

The Sephardic community had been in England longer than Ashkenazim had, and so had deeply internalized British tastes. In 1836, 18 members of the Sephardic Bevis Marks Synagogue (including members of the Montefiore and Mocatta families – two of the most powerful Jewish families in the country) petitioned the leadership of their congregation to shorten services, adopt a choir, and give sermons in English – all of which aligned Jewish ritual with British decorum. They hoped that, by becoming more British, they would prove themselves worthy of full emancipation. The reformers’ petitions were rejected by the elders of their community, and in 1840 they and a group of like-minded Ashkenazic Jews broke off and formed the first Reform congregation in England - the West London Synagogue.

This congregation was led by Rabid David Woolf, a former student of Chief Rabbi Solomon Hirschell. He and his congregants were not radical religious innovators. The congregation made only a few changes. It maintained separate seating for men and women, a trademark of traditional Judaism that other denominations of reform abandoned, until 1918. In 1841 this group published a letter to *The Gentleman Elders*

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37 For more on these developments see chapter two.
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid, 113.
41 Ibid.
Figure 3. David Woolf Marks, 1880-1990, National Library of Israel, Jerusalem.
of the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue in which they explained that the changes they had made were motivated by:

a sincere conviction that substantial improvements in the public worship are essential to the weal of our sacred religion.... We are firmly convinced that [the tendency of these reforms will be to arrest and prevent secession from Judaism – an overwhelming evil.\[42\]

In response, Hirschell issued an edict of excommunication against these “secessionists” which was read in all the synagogues but one and printed in The Voice of Jacob. He wrote:

information having reached me, from which it appears that certain Persons, calling themselves British Jews, publicly and in their published Book of Prayer, reject the Oral Law, I deem it my duty to declare that... any person or persons publicly declaring that he or they reject and do not believe in the authority of the Oral Law, cannot be permitted to have any communion with Israelites in any religious rite or sacred act.\[43\]

The Voice of Jacob declared that the edict was signed by “the secretaries of the principal Metropolitan Synagogues.” Particularly because tensions amongst London Jews were so inflamed, Hirschell’s death in 1842 shook the community dramatically. The Voice of Jacob dedicated an entire issue and several subsequent columns to his memory and the tumult caused by his death.\[44\]

Over two years would pass before his successor, Rabbi Nathan Marcus Adler, was elected. Adler, the great nephew of Tevele Schiff, was born in Hanover in 1803, and received a rigorous religious and secular education.\[45\] He attended the universities

\[43\] VOJ Volume One, Issue Ten, 4th February 1842, page 76.
of Gottingen, Erlangen, Wurzburg and Heidelberg, earned a PhD from Erlangen in 1828 and rabbinical ordination from the chief rabbi of Wurzburg, Abraham Bing, the same year. Adler was the first chief rabbi to be formally elected by a representative body comprised of citizens from nineteen cities in England and Ireland. In his opening address, he confessed that the task of leading a united British Jewry would be difficult, “in a time when some rest their hopes on rapid innovation, and others on steadfast adherence to whatever time has sanctified, even though it should be contrary to the law.” This statement intimated that Adler was as frustrated with the recalcitrant traditionalists whose hyperbolic conservatism perverted the spirit of the law as he was with the zealous progressives. This was misleading, he proved himself to be firmly on the side of tradition and profoundly opposed to change. During his time in office Adler encouraged the three main Ashkenazi synagogues – the Great Synagogue, The New Synagogue, and the Hambro Synagogue – to work together. They formed the United Synagogue to reinforce the communal ties bonding Ashkenazi Jews in the shadow of secularism, assimilation and reform.

By the end of the nineteenth century some 50,000 Jews lived in England, roughly 33,400 in London. Of that number, 3,000 were traditional Sephardim, 500 were Sephardic reformers, and the remaining 33,100 were traditional Ashkenazim. London Jewry was highly stratified, wealth was concentrated within about 200 families.

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in the nineteenth century, after the Jewish middle class had expanded due to upward mobility made possible through professionalization, about a third of British Jews were poor. Wealthy Jews worried that their Christian neighbors would associate Jews with poverty, so efforts were undertaken to “civilize” the poor. The most common of these was the establishment of Jewish Free Schools which taught, fed, and clothed the poorest of London’s Jews without cost. Students in these schools were trained as artisans in the hope that they would be able to make a living for themselves after graduation. By the end of the 1860s the following free schools serviced London’s poor: The Jews’ Free School, The Jews’ Infant School, the Western Jews’ Free School and the West Metropolitan School. These schools served only a fraction of the demographic for which they had been erected. Most poor Jewish families could not afford to sacrifice their salaries for their education.

Wealthy and middle class British Jews could afford to send their children to private Jewish boarding schools such as Gloucester House at Highgate and then Kew, Edmonton House School at Edmonton, Ohel Mosche we Jehudith at Brighton and then Broadstair, Sussex House at Dover, and Tivoli House Academy at Gravesend. Only a small percentage sent their sons to these schools, and there were no such schools for girls at that time. For the London elite, according to The Voice of Jacob, “the means of education are either a private academy, a public or endowed school, or under a private tutor.” A number of wealthy Jews sent their children to day schools in the city, but

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52Ibid. 81.
55 VOJ, Volume One, Issue One, September 1841 page two.
most upper and middle class youth went to secular schools and supplemented their education with private tutors on Jewish subjects. The most salient characteristic of Jewish education in England at this time was that there was not enough of it. Jewish ignorance was infamous. It was one of the forces Franklin undertook to combat.

Jacob Franklin was born in Portsmouth in 1809, the eldest of twelve siblings. His father, Abraham Franklin, was the son of a Hebrew teacher from Preslau. His mother, Miriam, was the daughter of Jacob and Alice Aaron. Abraham Franklin had been trained as a silversmith but accrued wealth in West Indies trade, money-changing and stockbroking. The family moved to Liverpool and then settled in Manchester when Jacob was thirteen. He was given a traditional Jewish education and from a young age demonstrated his own commitment to perpetuating the tradition. While teenagers he and his sister founded what would ultimately become the first Jewish day school in Manchester. Interested in philosophy, science and mathematics as well as Jewish studies, Franklin helped found the Manchester Mechanics Institute where he studied and then became a director and a mathematics instructor. He practiced as an optician and involved himself in his father’s business ventures in Manchester but retired in 1840 and moved to London where he agitated for Jewish emancipation and served as a public accountant. Franklin became a trusted authority on matters of finance and an expert on Indian finances in particular. The French, Indian and Brazilian railway companies were some of his clients and, upon receiving a recommendation from Baron

56 Singer, Jewish Education in the Mid-Nineteenth Century, 166.
Lionel de Rothschild, Prince Albert elected Franklin to work on an investigation into the Provident Savings Bank.\textsuperscript{57}

The notorious Damascus Affair of 1840, an episode in which thirteen members of the Jewish community in Syria were accused of kidnapping and murdering a Catholic Priest and his servant, and were then were imprisoned and violently tortured, deeply influenced Franklin.\textsuperscript{58} The trauma convinced him, and many other leaders in Jewish communities around the world, that he ought establish an organ dedicated to Jewish opinion and news.\textsuperscript{59} In England in particular, he feared that, due to ignorance and indifference perpetuated by “the neglect of parents and elders… [and] the liberalism of the day” Jewish youth valued entry into secular society over “the spiritual rank assigned by providence.”\textsuperscript{60} This indifference was a source of embarrassment and fear for Franklin who worried that it would dissuade Jews from rising to the aid of their coreligionists in other countries when atrocities like the Damascus Affair inevitably recurred. He established \textit{The Voice of Jacob} in part to mitigate that possibility.\textsuperscript{61} After securing backing from Moses Montefiore and Baron Lionel de Rothschild, Franklin moved ahead with the intention of serving only as the business director of the paper. The two men whom he had hoped would serve as editors proved unequal to the task, and so Franklin was forced to fulfil that role as well.\textsuperscript{62}

\textsuperscript{58} For more on the Damascus Affair see chapter three.
\textsuperscript{60} VOJ Volume Five, Issue One.10\textsuperscript{th} October 1845 , page one.
\textsuperscript{61} Before this point no Jewish periodical existed, though Moses Raphall had run \textit{The Hebrew Review}, a Hebrew literary journal, for a short while in 1836. Ibid.
He knew that there were conversionists (Christians intent upon missionizing Jews) among the readers of his paper, who read *The Voice of Jacob* in order to gather data about the Jewish community to better serve their cause. He came to realize, however, that there were also Christian philo-Semites who read his paper in the hopes of learning about the Jewish community from the Jews rather than from Christian Hebraists or conversionists. The foremost example of a philosemitic Christian, whom Franklin mentioned and published frequently, was Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, the editor of the Christian Lady’s Magazine. Her good will convinced Franklin that there were Christian neighbors whom he could rely upon for support.63

In his will, Franklin bequeathed five thousand pounds to a number of causes, listed in order of importance. First he allotted money towards “grants in aid of teachers of secular knowledge in Jewish schools” for Jewish communities located in countries in which Jews were ineligible for public office or other reputable positions solely because of their ignorance of relevant knowledge.64 He also bequeathed funding to the agricultural companies located in countries in which it was difficult for Jews to find employment on the condition that they give preference to Jews who applied for jobs. He bequeathed money to bursarships towards candidates for the Jewish University in England who had been given an orthodox certification; textbooks for Jewish schools, and money toward the creation of a central board for orthodox Judaism which would focus on Jewish education.65 He was survived by his brother’s biological children whom he had adopted after their father’s early death.66

63 Ibid. For more on Charlotte Elizabeth see Chapter three.
64 Arthur Ellis Franklin, *Records of the Franklin Family and Collaterals* (1915), No pagination.
65 Ibid.
66 University of Southampton, manuscript 305 *Papers of Jacob A. Franklin*. No Pagination.
Franklin hoped that, in creating an English press, he could “rally the straggling elements of our religious power and enterprise… to ‘agitare’ for useful objections, to combat prejudices, and to defend our sacred institutions.” His task was not uniformly traditionalist; in fact, throughout his editorship, Franklin was careful to publish a range of views on subjects of note, especially the subject of reform. It seems, he cared more about creating a unified community than a uniform one. Beneath the title, every issue declared that the paper was “[f]or the promotion of the spiritual and general welfare of the Jews, by the dissemination of intelligence on subjects affecting those interests and by the advocacy and defence of their religious institutions.” This was his creed to serve the global Jewish community by the transmission of information, advocacy and defense. Under his editorial direction, the paper had two primary purposes: promotion, and advocacy. The promotional mission of the paper was two-fold: relaying information about current events, and edifying readership about Jewish tradition. The former mission was a needed service, as before The Voice of Jacob was founded there was no English-language platform run by Jews that aggregated and disseminated information of interest to international Jews in general and to British Jews in particular. The only organ that did so was the the Jewish Intelligence, the London Society for the Promotion

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67 An important example is the contributor Tobias Theodores, who featured frequently throughout the paper. In The Voice of Jacob Theodores contributed articles on many subjects but one of his primary commitments was defending the reform movement. He argued that accepting the authority of the rabbis and the oral tradition was not a fundamental tenet of Judaism. Theodores was a linguist and Jewish scholar born in Prussia. He moved to London at sixteen, and then settled in Manchester where he began to teach languages. He met his wife, Sara Horsfall in Halifax and she converted from Christianity to Judaism so that they could marry in 1839. He helped found Owens College in 1851, fell ill in 1883 and, at his funeral in 1886, it was said that he had mastered fifty-two languages. The Manchester Guardian honored him after his death not only for his language skills, but also for his commitment to the progressive values which the city prided itself for championing. Joe Burns, “Theodores, Tobias (1808-1888). Oxford Dictionary for National Biography. (2015). For more on The Voice of Jacob’s complicated stance on reform, see chapter two.

68 Franklin stated this explicitly in the first issue of the paper, and the originality of the project has been confirmed by subsequent scholars. Cf Baruch Mevorah, “The Effects of the Damascus Affair on the Jewish Press in the Years 1840-1846” [Hebrew] Zion 23-24 (1958) 46.
of Christianity among the Jews’ official organ. Franklin, who preferred that Jews rather
than millenarian Christians serve as the primary source of information and advocacy for
Jews in England, hoped to usurp that role. To that end, the paper always featured a
section called *Foreign and Colonial Intelligence*. This section communicated information
about Jewish communities abroad to Jews who, “do not read the *Allgemeine Zeitung
des Judenthums*, - The *Orient*, - the *Annalen*, - the *Zion*, of Germany, or the *Archives
Israelites*… of France.” It included pithy summaries of current events in Jewish
communities abroad. Often these summaries were copied from corollary sections of
Jewish newspapers abroad. The global Jewish press borrowed from one another. *The
Voice of Jacob* supplied primary sources dealing with the Jewish communities in Britain
and the colonies, while papers in Germany featured primary sources about Jews in
Germany and in neighboring countries. The French, in kind, reported on Jews in France
and French colonies. This network was a transformative development in the story of
modern Jewish history. By sharing primary sources with one another these papers
formed what Franklin called “a chain” of communication.

Examples from the *Foreign and Colonial Intelligence* section are revealing. The
*Cape Good Hope* excerpt printed below provides context for how the editors of the
paper related to foreign Jewish communities:

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69 For more information about the London Society, see chapter 2.
70 VOJ, Volume One, Issue One, September 1841 page two. *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judenthums* was
founded by Ludwig Philippson in 1837 as a newspaper that dealt with the everyday lives of Jews. It was
operative till 1922. Julius Furst founded *Der Orient* in 1840 and it remained in circulation until 1851. *Zion*
was founded in 1841 and ceased operations the following year. *Archives des Israelites* was founded in
1840 by Samuel Cohen and remained in circulation until 1908. “Periodicals” *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1905),
604-603.
71 Franklin only mentioned his English audience in this article, but it is clear from other entries that the
*Foreign and Colonial Intelligence* section was as much for foreign communities as it was for his own.
Cape Good Hope. – We are favored with an extract from a letter dated, Cape Town, Oct. 12, 1841, communicating the pleasing intelligence, that divine service had been performed there on the recent day of atonement, by the first minyan which has assembled in that distant colony… The day was characterized by great solemnity, many being present who had not enjoyed the like opportunity for many years.73

Another example, the startling insertion Kidnapping for Conversions, alerted readers that a four-and-a-half-year-old Jewish girl “has been kidnapped from its Jewish parents, and secretly baptized.”74 To save her from hell, the girl’s Christian caretaker had decided to stealthily baptize her. After the deed was done, the government ruled that, since the child was already a Christian, she could not be returned to her parents’ home. This is the only example of a kidnapping report in the Voice of Jacob, but hostile foreign anti-Semitism was a recurring theme throughout all features of the paper.75 Similarly, both of these examples touch on themes that remain central throughout the paper’s seven years.

The Miscellaneous Intelligence section was similar in structure to Foreign and Colonial Intelligence though its scope was narrower. It featured information about recent events in England specifically, as, “While the British Jews occupy so prominent a position among their European brethren, it is extraordinary that there should exist no published organ of their opinions or record of their proceedings.”76 Again, a few

73 VOJ, Volume One, Issue Eight, 7th January 1842, page 61.
74 VOJ, Volume Three, Issue Fifty-nine, 10th November 1843, page 29.
75 Ten years after the paper was out of circulation, a similar event, the Mortara Case occurred. A six-year-old boy named Edgar Mortara was kidnapped by papal guards in Bolonga 23 June 1858. His caretaker, Anna Moirsi, had secretly baptized the boy when he was deathly ill. She confessed the act to a priest who sent word of it to Rome. The Vatican instructed that Edgar be forcibly removed from his parents’ home and raised as a Christian. Jewish communities around the world did their best to restore the child to his parents. English Jews convoked a mass meeting which culminated in Moses Montefiore traveling to Rome to petition the Pope to reverse his decision. At the same time a group of German rabbis sent a petition to the Pope. Montefiore was not given an audience and the petition was not read. Gotthard Deutsch “Moratara Case.” Jewish Encyclopedia (1906) 35-36.
76 VOJ, Volume One, Issue One, September 1841 page two.
examples will provide useful context. In *Charity Schools of the Spanish and Portuguese Congregations*, editors honored the “indefatigable exertions of a benevolent lady” who had succeeded in creating a fund “devoted to supplying the pupils (About 220 in number) with a bason of excellent soup to each, twice a week.”\(^{77}\) This section also featured information about English organizations that posed threats to traditional Jewry. In *Doings of the Conversionists*, editors reminded readers that The London Society, an organization committed to converting Jews to Christianity, had a newspaper in which they routinely featured “calumny against Judaism” and “unblushing attempts to destroy our nationality.”\(^{78}\) Editors also used this section to promote British Jewish intellectual endeavors:

*Association for the Promotion of Jewish Literature* - Of the publications ordered by this association, there have already arrived, the *Kerem Chemed* for the year 5601, (1841), together with *Parchei Tzafon* for the same year, and the first numbers of the *Zeitung des Judenthums* for the current year.... The extracts from a correspondence between Zunz, Luzzato, and Reggio, on R Elieser Hakalir (author of many of our Peyutim) will be read by the student of Jewish history with that attention which these literati so justly command.\(^{79}\)

Other features which relayed information about the Jewish community to readers included *Notices to correspondents*, *notices for the ensuing fortnight*, and *advertisements*. These sections were shorter and were intended to serve as communications, not as a source of interesting intelligence. For the modern scholar, however, they reveal much about the quotidian aspects of nineteenth century British Jewry that might otherwise remain mysterious.\(^{80}\) The other promotional objective of the

\(^{77}\) VOJ, Volume One, Issue Eight, 7\(^{th}\) January 1842, page 60.

\(^{78}\) VOJ, Volume Three, Issue Fifty-nine, 10\(^{th}\) November 1843, page 28.

\(^{79}\) VOJ, Volume Two, Issue Thirty-two, 28\(^{th}\) October 1842, page 52.

\(^{80}\) This section frequently included notices about upcoming galas, dinners or other community events which give a sense of the social rhythms of these Jews.
paper was to edify readership about the Jewish tradition. To that end, every issue included a lengthy dissertation on the portion of the Torah read the week of publication, which the editors hoped readers would read aloud at the sabbath table. These essays reveal how traditional London Jewry interpreted and related to the Torah. Consider an excerpt from the *Exposition of the Portion B’Haalotcha which began:*

>This portion opens with the inauguration of the Levites into the priesthood. From the peculiar ceremonies observed upon this occasion, from the solemnities and sacrifices, we may learn what importance was attached to the office of minister, and hence we may deduce the necessity of the strictest regard to character and morals, in the selection of a minister at the present day.81

As in this case, most of these dissertations included summaries of the portion, and a lesson which could be deduced from the text and applied to contemporary life. Franklin sporadically included retrospective reviews, or reviews of sacred Jewish texts which he hoped would demonstrate “the true character and tendency of those monuments of erudition which form our national literature.” Examples give a sense of the sorts of contemporary texts to which Franklin hoped to direct his readers. Consider this review of *The Nineteen Letters,* a philosophical work written by Samson Raphael Hirsch: “Naftulei Naftali [the struggles of Naftali]– By Dr. Hirsch, Chief Rabbi at Emden…. In an introductory letter, the author relates to his a friends a dream, which represents, in a species of allegory, the destructive tendencies of certain German Theologians and the consequences necessarily resulting.”82 In a review of *Paroles d’un Croyant Israelite,* a text written by Joel Anspach in 1842 in Paris, editors draw readers’

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81 VOJ Volume One, Issue Eighteen, 27th May 1842, page 138. B’Haalotcha is the 36th Torah portion of the Jewish calendar.
82 VOJ Volume Two, Issue Thirty-eight 20th January 1843, page 102. Samson Raphael Hirsch was chief rabbi of Emden at the time, was an advocate for traditional Judaism in Germany. The Nineteen Letters, mentioned here, were published in German in 1838. He is considered one of the fathers of the “Torah U’Madda” school of Jewish thought which compels Jews to study both Jewish and secular thought. Isidore Singer and Bernard Drachman. “Hirsch, Samson Raphael” *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1906) 417-418,
attention to Christian interests in and responses to questions like “Is the Jewish religion, in its principles and forms, incompatible with social adaptations?... Can the scriptural prophecies apply to the founder of the Christian religion?” Poems and translations of western texts, like Reviews, only appeared sporadically. Grace Aguilar, one of the solitary female Jewish poets of her day, was published for the first time in The Voice of Jacob, an example of a progressive editorial decision in a paper with traditional loyalties. Her poetry, short stories and reviews of her novels appeared several times before her early death. Translations of classical Western texts, printed in the original and in Hebrew, appeared as well.

Figure 2. After Racine, VOJ Volume One, Issue Twenty-two 22nd July 1842, page 176.

Consider Figure 4, which features a Hebrew translation by the intellectual Dr. Sommerhausen of a text by Racine. This excerpt reveals much about the intellectual expectations The Voice of Jacob had of its readership. It is worth noting that Dr. Sommerhausen’s translations appeared in all three of the major German Jewish

publications, which underscores the respect Franklin had for their example. The weightiest articles in every issue of The Voice of Jacob were the long essays which appeared at the beginning of each issue. There were sometimes as many as two or three such essays. It was here that serious political, philosophical and theological questions were analyzed in great detail, consistently demonstrating deep knowledge and careful analysis. An unexhaustive list of the titles of these essays offers an understanding of the subjects which the readership and editors of the paper took seriously: What are the British Jews; Sketches of the State of Jews in England; Especially in London; Why Ought Not the Jews be Emancipated; The Opinions of the Most Pious Rabbins of Antiquity; Judaism in Germany Since the Time of Mendelssohn and On The Social Condition of Jewish Females. The style of these pieces remained consistent, but again, Franklin considered it his duty to allow his contributors to offer contradicting views. It is worth emphasizing that it was more important to Franklin that his readers and contributors thought seriously about these subjects than that they agreed about them.

Franklin began plans to establish The Voice of Jacob in 1840. The following year the paper began as a fortnightly publication, and remained so for most of its life, except for brief intervals during which it was printed as a monthly or a weekly. The Voice of Jacob was in circulation from 1841-1848, but Jacob Franklin only served as editor in chief for the first five of the paper’s seven years, after which he was succeeded by his coworkers.

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86 VOJ, Volume One, Issue One, September 1841 page two.; Volume One, Issue Three, 29th October 1841, page 18; Volume One, Issue Five, 26th November 1841, page 36.
Abraham Benisch and Henry Jessel. The paper’s structure, content and purpose altered dramatically after Franklin’s departure, but remained consistent during his tenure. This study will focus only on the years of his editorship.

Initially, it was Franklin intention to publish *The Voice of Jacob* on his own. When this plan failed, he approached Steill Publishing House, one of a number of publishing houses located on Paternoster Row which was the hub for the publication and distribution of periodicals in London. Benjamin Steill, best known for publishing the *Black Dwarf*, a radical pamphlet critiquing the Church of England, had no ties to the Jewish community. It is not obvious why Franklin sought him out as publisher or why he agreed to publish *The Voice of Jacob*. Perhaps Franklin considered Steill’s opposition to the church a sign of solidarity with minority groups. The first issue of *The Voice of Jacob* was published on September 1841. Steill would remain the publisher of the periodical for all of the paper’s seven years.

*The Voice of Jacob*’s title was inspired by Genesis: 27:22 “And Jacob drew close to Isaac who felt him and said, ‘The voice is the voice of Jacob and the hands are the hands of Esau.’” This verse was likely selected because of the founding editor’s name, though Franklin never explicitly offers an explanation for it. The subtitle, “‘Thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north and to the south, and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’” *Vocation of the Jews.*

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87 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
90 It is surprising that an editor would choose to align himself with Jacob in a verse in which that forefather fools his aging father. Perhaps there was some mysterious motivation, lost to history, which inspired Franklin to select this verse.
Figure 3. Grace Aguilar, New York Public Library Digital Collection 1880-1890.
“GEN, xxvii. 14” was printed on every title page of the paper beginning in the second year of publication. This verse made Franklin’s intention to use the press as a means of creating a global Jewish community explicit. This point is not trivial. Since Jewish communities across Europe were developing at different rates, the Jewish press was the primary, transformative vehicle to create and cement an international Jewish unity. These papers used one another as sources of information. They created a network, and Jacob Franklin in particular was explicit about this international role. Every time a new Jewish newspaper was established during Franklin’s editorship, he welcomed the “new link in the chain” in *The Voice of Jacob*.

In the tenth issue of the paper, the editors announced that they would heed the request, apparently made by readers, to print a full list of all subscriptions received. A list of all subscribers, organized by geographic location, was inserted at the start of the first issue of subsequent volumes. In the second year, at least one copy of the paper was ordered by an individual in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Canterbury, Lancaster, Dover, Edinburgh, Philadelphia, Barbados, and Charleston. By its fifth year its circulation in each of these cities had more than doubled, and its reach had extended to include Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Albergavenny, Bangor, Bath, Brighton, Bristol, Brompton, Canterbury, Cheltenham, Derby, Dover, Dumfries, Dublin, Derry, Edinburgh, Exeter, Falmouth, Glasgow, Hull, Isle of Wight, Ipswich, Jersey, Lancaster, Leeds, Molesworth, Norwich, Oswestry, Penzance, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Ramsgate,

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91 Mevorah, “The Effects of the Damascus Affair on the Jewish Press,” 48. Mevorah points out that Franklin was uniquely interested in using the press to create a global Jewry.
92 In one article about a new Jewish newspaper in Australia, Franklin wrote that that community was “severally designing to follow the example which it has been our privilege to set them; they propose to supply, by means, of the press, what we originally called, the several ‘inks of a chain of communication between Jews all over the world.’” VOJ Volume Two, Issue Forty-four, 14th April 1843, 150.
93 VOJ Volume One, Issue Ten, 4th February 1842, page 70.
Reading, Rugby, Salisbury, Sheffield, Sheerness, Shrewsbury, Skipton, Sidmouth, Southampton, Swansea, Torquay, Truro, Weare, Worcester, Ireland, Gibraltar, Barbados, Corfu, Montreal, New York, Philadelphia, Sidney, Jamaica, St. Ann’s Bay, Black River, Manchester, Spanish Town, Falmouth, Montego Bay, Ocho Rios, Cape of Good Hope, St. Thomas, W.I., Curacoa, Wi.I. New Zealand, Smyrna, and Paris. The editors never explicitly explained how the papers were delivered to communities abroad. They did, however, urge subscribers outside of London to give their orders to “any respectable bookseller” in order to simplify their operations. This instruction intimates that subscribers would otherwise expect the papers to be delivered to their individual homes via the post.

The structure of the paper remained consistent throughout Franklin’s editorship. Every issue was eight pages long. The header of the title page included the paper’s name in Hebrew and English, a brief description of the paper’s purpose, followed by verse 28:14 from Genesis in English, the volume number, the western and Jewish date and the issue price. Beneath the date, a short table of contents, which included the title of each article and feature in order of appearance, was printed. Each issue always began with a long essay on matters of importance to the community, and always included a dissertation on the Torah portion which would be read in synagogue on the sabbath the week of publication. The placement of the dissertation on the Torah portion changed often but its style was consistent. The paper always concluded with the following features: Miscellaneous Intelligence, Foreign and Colonial Intelligence, Our Letter Box, Notices for the Ensuing Fortnight, and Advertisements. Occasionally,

94 VOJ Volume Five, Issue One, 10th October 1845, page one.
95 VOJ Volume One, Issue Ten, 4th February 1842, page 75.
poetry, reviews, short stories and translations appeared in the paper, at unfixed intervals between the usual features.

According to *Records of the Franklin Family*, after Jacob Franklin’s retirement, Dr. Abraham Benisch and Henry Jessel assumed control of the paper, Benisch as editor and Jessel as treasurer. Under their leadership the structure and content of the paper changed. Both of these men were leaders of great standing in the Jewish community. After the paper ceased publication in 1848, Henry Jessel would continue to occupy positions of leadership amongst British Jews, serving on boards and raising money for community institutions. In 1871 his nephew, George Jessel, would become the first Jewish Solicitor General.96

Abraham Benisch was more influential and respected amongst British Jews than Jessel or Franklin. Born in Dossau in 1814, he studied medicine at the University of Prague where he joined a movement for promoting the reestablishment of “Jewish independence in Eretz Israel.” In 1838 he continued his studies in Vienna where he was initiated into *Die Einheit*, a secret society promoting Jewish emigration to the Holy Land. After *The Voice of Jacob* was discontinued, Benisch founded his own publication, *The Hebrew Observer*, in 1853. A year later his publication merged with the *Jewish Chronicle* for which he served as editor from 1853-1866 and then from 1875-1878. Benisch cofounded *Mikveh Israel*, an agricultural school for Jews, was one of the founders and directors of the Anglo-Jewish Association, and served on the committee of The Hebrew Antiquarian Society along with Chief Rabbi Adler and other distinguished

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leaders of the Jewish community. In addition to administrative duties, Benisch also published lectures and essays about contemporary Jewish thought and society, a commentary on Ezekiel, Two Lectures on the Life and Writings of Maimonides, a translation of the Bible into English, a Hebrew book of grammar, and he published a collection of his lectures entitled Judaism Surveyed. Benisch also wrote a response to Alexander McCaul’s attack on the Talmud.

The Voice of Jacob was the first Jewish newspaper in English to begin operations in England, but Isaac Vallentine founded the Jewish Chronicle, the oldest Jewish newspaper in circulation today, a few months after The Voice of Jacob’s first issue. British Jewry was not capable of sustaining both publications, and in 1842 the Jewish Chronicle merged with The Voice of Jacob under Franklin’s editorship. Under the leadership of Joseph Mitchell, the Chronicle broke from The Voice of Jacob in 1844 using the title The Working Man’s Friend. These two newspapers were founded at the same time as fifty-six similar ones were established around the world. After the Damascus Affair, a travesty committed against the Jews of Syria in 1841, Jewish newspapers jumped from fifteen to fifty-six. The publications which most influenced Franklin’s editorial philosophy were those that had already been in circulation before the Damascus Affair. Particularly the French and German Jewish periodicals from which he so often quoted and upon which he modeled the structure of his publication. These

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97 Corresponding members of The Hebrew Antiquarian Society included Zechariah Frankel, Dr. Samuel David Luzzato, Dr. Abraham Geiger, Dr. Lipman Zunz, and Chief Rabbi Salomon Rapoport, all of whom were leaders of the Wissenschaft des Judenthums movement. Nota bene that Dr. Sommerhausen, the translator frequently featured in the Voice of Jacob, was a member of this body as well.


100 For more information about the Damascus Affair and its effect on the Jewish press see chapter two.
included Zeitung des Judenthums founded in 1798 under the editorial leadership of Ludwig Philippsen; Der Orient founded in 1840 by Julius Fust; and Archives Israelites founded in 1840 in Paris.

Franklin also likely hoped to align his publication with contemporary secular intellectual journals which dominated British intellectual life. The Chambers Edinburgh Journal, a prestigious journal founded by William Chambers in 1832, printed a notice about The Voice of Jacob which described it as a “somewhat remarkable periodical….conducted, as we should suppose, on the model of the ‘Zeitung des Judenthums’ …. or the ‘Archives des Israelites’ of France, papers devoted to matters connected with the proceedings of Jewish institutions in continental Europe.”

The Voice of Jacob frequently referred to The Times of London and dedicated several columns and features to debate about The Times’ philo-Semitism (or lack thereof, depending on the author of the article) which reflected the power that publication had over public opinion. These columns indicate that the Jewish community considered The Times’ conception of Judaism barometrically significant - it demonstrated the way the wind was blowing.

A newspaper touches upon and influences myriad aspects of its readers’, writers’ and editors’ lives. This paper in particular was designed to touch upon the highest and most mundane subjects in order to extend jurisdiction as widely as possible. One cannot simply open its pages, study its contents and expect to understand. Familiarity with its history and the history of the voices it has preserved must come first. This

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chapter provided context without which one could not hope to understand the themes explored in chapters two and three.
Chapter II

“Cautious, progressive, authorized improvement”

_The Voice of Jacob_ bears witness to the intellectual, spiritual and social shifts of Jewish life in England during a period of transition. Whether this community was prepared for the evolution of Judaism or not, the conditions which had maintained Jewish life in Europe for generations preceding the mid nineteenth century had been stripped away by 1841.\(^{102}\) This was true in many countries throughout Europe, but the changes manifested themselves differently in different places. For a variety of reasons, in a variety of places the Judaism that had developed during the early modern period was no longer sustainable. The community of which Jacob Franklin was a member had to adapt its religious culture to make it compatible with its modern English context, just as Jews in other countries had to make corollary adjustments. Modern historians have argued that British Jews were “ill-educated and intellectually unsophisticated” and that their indifference to the world of ideas engendered a reform movement with no intellectually self-conscious dimension.\(^{103}\) What is clear from _The Voice of Jacob_ is that London’s Jews lacked a substantive Jewish education, a problem which the paper’s editors acknowledged and did their best to mitigate, but it is also evident that there were members who read and contributed to the paper who were bent on having a hand in defining modern Judaism.\(^{104}\) They, along with the editors of the paper, tried to design a religious culture that had intrinsic integrity, but was also adapted to and influenced by

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\(^{102}\) Jacob Katz, _Out of the Ghetto_, 1-10.

\(^{103}\) Endelman, _The Jews of Georgian England_, 231.

\(^{104}\) Several issues of _The Voice of Jacob_ touch upon the subject of ignorance in England. Cf: Volume One, Issue One, September 1841 page two for an analysis of the problem.
British notions of gentility and intellectual sophistication. One of the hallmarks of Franklin’s editorial philosophy is his insistence that Jewish texts and rituals are as philosophically and intellectually rich as non-Jewish Western ones. The doors of secular society had been slowly but surely opening to English Jews, and they sought a middle ground which would preserve their tradition while achieving acceptance in England. In order to understand the implications of the choices the editors and writers of the paper made on the study of Jewish history, it is necessary to understand the unique character of the era in which the paper was circulated.

In the medieval period a Jew’s identity was defined primarily by her Judaism. The culture of her native country was far less influential than the culture of her Jewish community. Judaism, like every rich culture, is comprised of far more than a particular set of beliefs which can be put into language, studied and taught. Though the study of Jewish law and its application was a fundamental part of traditional Judaism, the tradition permeated realms of life beyond the bounds of legal doctrine. It shaped the very minds of medieval Jews. Much of the essential parts of Jewish identity were absorbed through osmosis from birth. Before the modern period, Jews operated within a Jewish framework. There were certainly different sects within Judaism, and they often disagreed virulently with one another about what Judaism ought to look like,

105 David Philipson dates the origins of Reform in England to protestations against lack of decorum during prayer which were symptomatic of internalized British notions of etiquette. Robert Liberles, “The Origins of the Jewish Reform Movement in England” AJS Review, no. 1 (1976): 121.
106 In the first article of the first paper Franklin offers the following explanation for including review and retrospectives of Jewish work: “An opportunity will be afforded of illustrating the true character and tendency of those monuments of erudition which form our national literature. Their many excellences may be exhibited… so that the Jew may feel a just pride, not merely in the valour and enterprise of his ancestry, but in the recollection that they, in the dark and middle ages…. Did likewise so foster learning and the arts, and so extend such influence by their own enlightened labours, that enquirers after truth, of all creeds, have cheerfully become their historians and sung their praises.” VOJ, Volume One, Issue One, September 1841 page three.
but all of these sects were operating within a Jewish framework. The questions that they wrestled with were about how to properly practice Judaism. These arguments did not threaten the perpetuation of the tradition. In the modern period, this was no longer the case. The Jews of Europe had the capacity to assimilate, and this capacity ruptured the Jewish enclave. Disagreements amongst Jews in this new period were not only about whether to practice Jewish law in one way or another, but also whether to obey Jewish law at all. In England in particular, which was influenced by the British aversion to the articulation of systematic worldviews, many Jews simply stopped obeying Jewish law without offering any theological or philosophical explanation.  

The Jewish framework that existed before assimilation became possible was protected and perpetuated by strict cultural norms from within, and the hostility of the non-Jewish world without. Anti-Semitism forced the Jewish community to remain insulated. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Jew hatred was partially a product of religious bigotry. Reverend William Romaine, a leader of the Evangelical revival, told his followers that Jewish hatred for Jesus was so powerful, they would crucify him a second time if given the opportunity. Similarly, a pamphlet circulated in 1753 claimed that Jews were committed to overthrowing Christianity and The Westminster Journal insisted that the essence of Judaism was “contempt for Christ, and implacable hatred of Christians, and an impious detestation to Christianity.” These religious justifications for anti-Semitism were used to block Jewish Naturalisation in 1753. They were not, however, the only form of anti-Semitism in England. Secular anti-Semitism, which essentialized Judaism as a rapacious lust for wealth, was also popular.

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109 Ibid, 86.
110 Ibid, 87-88.
In 1810, for example, a pamphlet about Jewish history observed that the Jews managed to be successful in business despite not working on the Sabbath. The author explained that “this circumstance can only be accounted for by their unremitting diligence and constant attention to the main object of all their undertakings, the unquenchable thirst for wealth…. The striking character of the Jew is that he is never satisfied.”

Society was rife with similar examples of this sort of prejudice. While obviously unpleasant, these prejudices were not dangerous in the same way that anti-Semitism elsewhere were. The difference between one country’s Jew-hatred and another’s was one of the factors that distinguished how different Jewish communities matriculated into the modern period.

The pages of The Voice of Jacob affirm that Jewish communities around the world responded differently to modernization. The impulse to alter Jewish practice in accordance with modern sensibilities was a source of tension in Jewish communities in many places as reformist groups agitated to adapt Judaism and traditionalists safeguarded the Judaism they had inherited. The editors of The Voice of Jacob dealt with reform in each community on a case by case basis, which appropriately reflects the varying factors contributing to reforms in different places. Editors overtly distinguished between German and English reform, for example. An analysis of how the editors of The Voice of Jacob treated each of these communities demonstrates how variegated and complex Jewish modernization really was.

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113 In Out of the Ghetto, Jacob Katz maintains that German reform was the blueprint for Jewish reform around the world. His narrative has been disproven by subsequent historians like Todd Endelman. In the Jews of Georgian England, however, Endelman, argued that English Jews in particular were unconcerned with the intellectual and spiritual currents which precipitated reform. The Voice of Jacob’s
In the first issue of the paper, Abraham Benisch contributed an anonymous essay entitled *What are the British Jews? And What May They Become?* In which he explained that British Jewry represented a middle ground between Eastern and Western Judaisms.\(^{114}\) This was the first explicit articulation of *The Voice of Jacob*’s self-conception on the subject of Jewish modernization. In it, Benisch explained that Jewish responses to modernity can be plotted on a spectrum between two extremes: the Eastern Jews who were “entirely deaf to the rustling of the wings of time, holding scrupulously fast, not so much upon religion as upon her form, without a visible influence on their morals” and the Jews of the West, typified by German Jewry who suffered from “a want of those characteristics which influence their more Eastern Brethren.”\(^{115}\) Benisch, who was born and raised in Germany, encouraged the Jews of London to “[hold] fast the essence of Judaism, [while also endeavoring to] earnestly study the genius of their time, in order to harmonise with it the performance of their duties.” He believed that, due to the exceptional tolerance practiced in England, and to English reverence for tradition, British Jews were best disposed to create a Judaism that was loyal to tradition, but that also acclimated it to the wisdom of the West.

Benisch’s essay oversimplifies the differences between Jewish reform movements throughout Europe by plotting them on a single spectrum. Still, the image is useful if only because it admits that Jewish reform was not uniform. One of the careful attention to the different forces causing and caused by Jewish reform around the world contradict both of these analyses of Jewish history.

\(^{114}\) Volume One, Issue One, September 1841 page five. Benisch is identified as the author of this essay by Jacob Franklin in the Jewish Chronicle.

\(^{115}\) There are other instances in *The Voice of Jacob* which make clear that this was a gross simplification of German Judaism, as Benisch surely knew since he was a German Jew himself. For an example of an article that makes distinctions between different periods and denominations within German Jewry see
WHAT ARE THE BRITISH JEWS? AND WHAT MAY THEY BECOME?

BY A FOREIGNER.

It is a truth hardly disputed by any one, that the Jews, diffused over the surface of the globe, participate in the character of the several nations among whom they have been allowed to settle. It may be presumed from this statement, that all those characteristics which particularly mark the English will also be traced in the Jew, resident in Britain with all the force which belongs to those characteristics, though diversified according to the laws with which preservation of caste, different religious views, and a peculiar history must colour them. And certainly there is seldom a presumption which reality confirms so fully as that in question. Nay, it seems even as if a happy predisposition, rooted in the character of the Jews at large, had facilitated the transfiguration of the peculiarities of the English into their minds, blending them with their own. Thus British activity, perseverance, and enterprising indisputably found their prototype in the Jew. Thus gravity, strong faith, vehemence for customs sanctioned by centuries, and deep religious feeling which mark the character of the English, have been in all times the inheritance of the Jew. Thus the patriarchal customs of the Jews, and their compassionate spirit, which have vindicated them always as the most reasonable, have been enhanced, by engraving on them the generosity, liberality, and simple manners of a nation whose chief model is the Bible. But as the above qualities constitute their virtues, even so, others, not less respectable in themselves, which the English Jews share in common with the British nation at large, become defects by overlapping the limits compatible with the spirit of Judaism, and so producing much mischief. I allude to an over-fondness for that which is picturesque and palpable; and to that absence of political laws for the regulation of moral and religious institutions, which characterise the English people. No doubt, the English nation is in many respects indebted to these two qualities for its greatness. It is this over-fondness which, on the one hand, prevents her from going astray into the vast and sterile fields of speculation, and on the other hand, impels her to every endeavour likely to produce useful results. And certainly, no objection can be raised, so long as usefulness is the test for temporary interests only, so long as it leaves a fair field for exertions which, derived from the most exalted ances of mankind, should always claim their chief attention. But so soon as this utilitarianism is allowed to make unlawful excursions out of its legitimate boundaries; so soon as it is applied as a scale to objects, by which their nature cannot be computed thereby, there must necessarily ensue false notions, which notions, in their turn, cannot but engender false actions. Unfortunately, this seems to be the case with the British Jews in general. In whatever consists the great mission entrusted by the Almighty to Israel, thus much is sure: its discharge is inconsistent with an entire absorption by interests which leave no more room than is necessary to the practice of religious performances handed down by past centuries, and mechanically executed. Whatever constitutes the mission of Judaism, the fulfilment of which it has pleased Providence to entrust to the Israelites, thus much is sure, it is incompatible with an apathy which disregards the necessity of securing the inheritance of our forefathers to posterity, and which neglects to take steps for enabling them fully to discharge the important duties which that inheritance imposes. Injuriously as this indifference in itself becomes to Judaism, it must prove the more detrimental from the fact, that political laws do not here provide for the regulation of public, religious, or moral institutions. This circumstance, (the most abundant source of evil, though also of good,) gives a loose rein to any and every speculation in these important fields. Each erects its standard, each endeavours to rally partizans around, and as the English people is so numerous, and so nobly disposed, each succeeds in gathering the force necessary for its accomplishment. But this is not true of the Jews, whose similar attempts for Jewish interests prove abortive. And wherefore is this? Various schemes are proposed at the same moment. No doubt, every one of them good and laudable. But the small number of the Jews on the one hand, and their apathy on the other, prevent the concentration of the force requisite for carrying them out; and thus the conflicting attempts defeat each other: or, if successful, they resemble the inedible fruit of a hothouse, forced into existence by a short-lived zeal, whilst a harmonious co-operation, the result of common investigation of the primary essentials might realise all that could be desired usefully and permanently.

If the picture we have presented be drawn by nature, it becomes manifest, that the British Jews individually are adorned by all those virtues which make the man respectable, or the citizen useful and patriotic; but that they are less distinguished for those virtues which might shed lustre on them as a body.

There is perhaps no question started by philosophy, which is at the same time so difficult and so easy to be answered as this: What is the peculiar vocation of the Israelite allotted to him by the consummation wisdom of God, beyond that which he has in common with other men? Difficult when, diving dartingly into the hidden cushions of Omniscience, we would account for every special law and historical event of the Jewish nation, attempt to ascribe a sufficient solution—easy, when, keeping within the limits of the question, we content ourselves with outlines, renouncing all researches into details. For in this case, a slight survey of the character of the holy law, of the history of the Jews, of the relations in which they have stood and still stand towards others, shows plainly, that to be, amid the agitated ocean of time, the imperishable rock, from the summit of which, beams the gentle flame of truth, lighting as well the paths which threaten ruin, as those which lead to the desired haven; that they are destined to be an everlasting, a living monument, erected in the youth of mankind, which, incessantly and stronger than nature herself, bears witness of a bounty without limit, of a Providence without change; that they are destined to be the representatives of the religious feelings, and moral truths which the Universe manifests and inspires; a consciousness of this hallowing their every thought, and influencing their every action. No doubt, the discharge of this great mission requires a constant, indefatigable exertion of all their faculties; nay, a co-operation unobstructed by outward obstacles. The Jews, holding fast the essence of Judaism, must earnestly study the genius of their time, in order to harmonise with it the performance of their duties. They must carefully follow the development of religious and moral truths, that they may not appear in opposition. They must gallantly struggle for the removal of all civil disabilities which are so likely to fix upon those who labour under those public contempt. In reviewing the efforts of the Jews to this end throughout the world, we nowhere discover this desired combination and concentration of energies of all the just mentioned exertions. A straight line drawn from eastern Europe to its western part, would show a very remarkable gradation in this respect, of its Jewish inhabitants. On the one extremity we find them entirely deaf to the rustling of the wings of time, holding scrupulously fast, not so much upon religion as upon her form, without a visible influence on their morals. But time which cannot be disregarded with impunity lies heavy on their hands. In the centre we see a youthful sprightliness, a noble activity to run all risks: but there is no stability, no harmony; the runners push each other; the paths end in a labyrinth; they have lost the thread, they cannot retrace their steps. On the other extremity of this imaginary line, we observe a want of those characteristics which influence their more Eastern brethren. It seems to be reserved to the British Jews to blend those qualities which appertain to the two first-named bodies. To this combination their dispositions, their situation, and their relations appear to have destined them.

Not less attached to the precepts of our holy religion than their Eastern brethren, the impulses proceeding from Germany will and must find their way to the shores of Albion. But cautioned by the errors, losses, and repentance, of their German
challenges which *The Voice of Jacob* set for itself was creating an international Jewish identity. As Jewish communities adapted to their respective countries’ cultures, they began to have less in common with one another. A major concern for the editors of the paper was that Jews around the world were not sufficiently aware of the changes each community underwent. The editors intended to use *The Voice of Jacob* to inform English Jews about the changes other communities were undergoing, and to inform Jews abroad about the changes in their own community as well. Interestingly, Benisch also believed that London Jews were uniquely disposed to offer a perfect model of modernization. Despite the fact that they suffered from divisions over the question of reform, he argued that British liberalism and British reverence for tradition would create the perfect conditions for Jewish modernization. Benisch explained,

> Protected by the laws of an unparalleled constitution, assisted by a sympathy founded on true enlightenment, the exertions for the interests of Judaism will here find their centre, and hence will they diverge to a circle which shall embrace the whole earth. It is for this purpose that Providence seems to have held back the English Jews thus long in order that they might profit by the experience of others… Happy the Jews of the universe, if their British brethren understand their position – if they render themselves equal to its duties. Happier still the British Jews to whom such a future is vouchsafed. ¹¹⁶

In the battle for reform, *The Voice of Jacob* was traditionalist but not reactionary. Ultimately was less interested in maintaining Jewish tradition than it was in the cohesion of the Jewish community. This principle shaped how they reported about reform in England, in which the uncommon degree of personal freedom caused high attrition rates amongst Orthodox Jews. ¹¹⁷

¹¹⁶ VOJ Volume One, Issue One, September 1841, page three.
The reform movement in London began in the Sephardic community which had been in England longest and had deeply internalized British social norms. In 1812 Sephardic Londoners gave voice to reformist impulses by critiquing behavior in the synagogue which they believed was indecorous. Twenty-four years later this same group submitted a formal request to introduce reforms that would alter Synagogue practice. The committee “for promoting Order and Solemnity in the Synagogue” was formed in 1838 in response to which a traditionalist counter committee dedicated to “supporting and upholding the Jewish religion as handed down to us by our revered ancestors and to prevent innovations or changes in any of its recognized forms and customs unless sanctioned by the recognized authorities” was established. In 1840 the reformist Sephardic group proposed the creation of a branch within the Bevis Marks Synagogue which would adopt certain reforms. When this proposal was rejected, this group began plans to create the first reform synagogue in England. Up till this point the English reform had been an entirely Sephardic phenomenon. In 1840, however, sympathetic Ashkenazi Jews joined the new reform congregation. This rupture within the London Jewish community was described by contemporaries as, “the most painful episode in modern Anglo-Jewish history.”

118 Haham Moses Gaster wrote, “This cry [for reform] was taken up, though faintly at the beginning by that section of the community which had lived so long in London, as to feel themselves entirely English, and who therefore could be in sympathy with that movement on the Continent and were stimulated and encouraged by it. Thus to the jealousy which was growing up between the two sections of the community, the one which had lived longer in England, and which had come directly from Spain and Portugal, and those who, although of Spanish and Portuguese descent, were comparatively new comers, was now added a difference of religious conception…” Moses Gaster, “History of the Ancient Synagogues of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews (London, 1901), 168-169. Robert Liberles points out that, while Gaster’s observations are historically significant, they lack appreciation for the social and political factors which contributed to reform. Liberles, The origins of the Jewish Reform Movement in England, 124.
119 Liberles, The origins of the Jewish Reform Movement in England, 121.
120 Ibid, 122.
Of the six members of the Ashkenazi community who joined the reform effort, one was Francis Goldsmid, a leader of Ashkenazi Londoners and the foremost actor in the fight for Jewish emancipation in England. In 1838 Goldsmid requested that the board of the Great Synagogue alter a clause in the constitution of the Board of Deputies, of which he was a member, which stated that the Board was “to be the only official medium of communication with Government in matters concerning the political interests of the British Jews.” Goldsmid argued that those members of the board who had championed Jewish emancipation would be prohibited from continuing that work if the clause remained in place. The Board ultimately repealed the clause, but Goldsmid’s frustration with the Board’s centralized power and inactivity incited him to join the inchoate reform community.

Various historians offer overlapping analyses of what motivated reform in England. David Feldman argues that it was a response to the “Evangelical critique of Judaism as a form of popery.” According to Feldman, the Protestant culture in England bred a distrust for rabbis and the Talmud – the repository of Jewish oral law. British Protestants associated the hierarchical Talmudic tradition with the Catholic Church. Due to this prejudice, contempt for the oral law and for rabbinical authority became a trademark of the reform movement in London. This is perhaps why one of the terms The Voice of Jacob used to refer to reformers was “Jewish Protestants.”

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124 Liberles, The origins of the Jewish Reform Movement in England, 126.
Others claim that reform Jews feared their practices were antiquated, and insisted the congregation abandon archaic laws which isolated them from British society.\(^{127}\) A good example of a hostile critic of traditional Judaism was Isaac Disraeli, a born Jew who later converted to Christianity.\(^{128}\) Writing in the early and mid-nineteenth century, Isaac Disraeli condemned Jewish rabbis for “cast[ing] their people into a bondage of ridiculous customs.” He was one of a number of nineteenth century figures who condemned orthodox Jews for following the Talmud, which he called “a prodigious mass of contradictory opinions” and claimed that young Jews were weak, impotent scholars “growing pale over this immense repository of human follies.”\(^{129}\) Setting aside his hostile tone, Disraeli’s concerns were not unusual. Even British Jews who did not advocate for reform betrayed the fear that Christians judged them poorly for remaining loyal to an antiquated system. While contributors to the paper and the editors themselves frequently asserted that the condition of British Jewry was far better than the condition of their contemporaries in other countries, they still betrayed a fear of Christian hostility. A lecture by Reverend M. J. Raphall\(^{130}\), which was printed in the thirty-first issue of the paper, insisted that

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128 Born in 1776 in London, Isaac Disraeli was a writer best known as the father of Benjamin Disraeli who would later become prime minister of England. James Ogden “D’Israeli, Isaac (1766–1848), writer.” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (2004). David Katz argues that had Isaac Disraeli not caused his whole family to convert to Anglicanism while Benjamin was still a child, Benjamin Disraeli would not have been able to become Prime Minister, because he would have had to wait to join parliament until after emancipation was achieved, and so would not have had time to accrue the reputation and respect necessary to be elected Prime Minister. David Katz, *The Jews in the History of England*, 333.
130 “The usages of the far distant east refer to the demands of Jewish Law. Morris Jacob Raphall was born in Sweden, where his father was banker to the King. He was educated at the Hebrew grammar school in Copenhagen and then later moved to London, studied many languages, became a rabbi, author, and translator, and was considered a leading intellectual amongst the London Jewry. He founded a Hebrew Review, and Magazine of Rabbinical Literature a Hebrew literary magazine which he was forced to discontinue due to poor health in 1836. Raphall published many translations of texts written by important Jewish historical figures including Maimonides, Albo and Herz Wessely. He and Rabbi David A.
The question is continually put to the Israelite, ‘why do you, in this western clime, still keep the usages of the far distant east? Why do you, in this age of progress and improvement, still cling to the observances of remote antiquity? How comes it, that after a lapse of thirty-five centuries, your primitive laws still retain their influence over your minds, while all other institutions have again and again been remodeled?\textsuperscript{131}

Raphall was trying to give strength to traditional Jews who might be tempted to abandon orthodoxy. He urged them to remember that Jewish law was a gift, and that they had been uniquely selected by God to perpetuate the tradition. But even while Raphall expressed loyalty to traditional Judaism, he demonstrated the same self-conscious impulses which incited reformers to try and adapt Judaism to modernity.

Another theory claims that the “linguistic assimilation into the English language” was the defining force of Jewish modernization in England.\textsuperscript{132} The translation of Jewish life from Yiddish or Hebrew into English transformed the lives of British Jews so that their “religious attitudes and behaviors resembled to an unparalleled degree those of their English and Protestant neighbors.”\textsuperscript{133} Translating one culture into the language of another radically alters the nature of the original. Linguistic assimilation accelerated Anglo Jewish integration into Victorian English life. The Torah itself was read by this community in the English translation because they could not understand the Hebrew original. Translations of the Bible were predominantly written by Christians, which was one of the reasons that the translation of Jewish texts by Jews was so important.

English Jews were provoked to alter Jewish practice so that it replicated Victorian-


\textsuperscript{131} VOJ Volume one, Issue Thirty-one, 14th October 1842, page 45 - 46.

\textsuperscript{132} Ruderman, \textit{Jewish Enlightenment in an English Key}, 7.

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.
English decorum, and to alter certain aspects of Jewish worship which were incompatible with British gentility.

Robert Liberles proposes that reform is best understood within the context of the struggle for Jewish emancipation. Leaders within the community disagreed about how best to secure emancipation, and these internal tensions influenced the way that Jewish reform evolved. It was a process that must be considered on multiple levels. No historical movement is the product of parthenogenesis. Proper analysis requires a grasp of the interplay of political, social and religious forces at work in each particular time and place. This movement is no different.  

These theories contextualize the changes that the West London Synagogue made in its service and practice. It began prayers at a later hour and made services shorter in order to eliminate disruptive late arrivals and early departures from the synagogue. These changes “preserve[d] proper decorum during the performance of divine worship.” Sermons were read in English rather than Hebrew, “to familiarize the rising generation with a knowledge of the great principles of our holy faith” which was necessary since English Jews were monolingual. The congregation also explicitly underscored its British identity and underplayed the differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardic members. One of the synagogue’s spokespersons explained, “By this appellation [‘British Jew’] we have happily merged the absurd and untrue distinction of German and Portuguese Jews. We are Englishmen, consequently British Jews.” This congregation also added a choir to their service. Reform congregations often incorporated both an organ and a choir into sabbath worship in attempts emulate

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134 Libereles, Reform Movement in England, 150.  
135 Jewish Chronicle, I (March 21, 1845), 122.  
136 Ibid, 124.
“Victorian-Christian decorum.”137 Reformers in England only requested a choir, because Oral Law prohibited Jews from playing instruments on the sabbath. This is an example of their comparative loyalty to Jewish law. In Germany, for example, both choirs and organs were added.138

Finally, reformers also abolished the observance of the second day of festivals. This was considered the most radical alteration. Since the eviction of the Jews from Jerusalem, Jews in the diaspora had extended holidays by one day. It was a stringency which had developed in oral law, but which was not stipulated in the Torah. Reform Jews considered it an unnecessary practice, which was “at variance with the commands of God, and the spirit of our own age.”139 Orthodox Jews, who were devoted to the Talmudic tradition and the rabbinical authority of the rabbis considered the abolition of the second day a radical departure from tradition.

The first time The Voice of Jacob directly referred to reformers within the London Jewish community was in the seventh issue of the first volume. The article, which reported plans for the establishment of the reform congregation, was provoked by a letter in the Archives Israelites which discussed the British “Secessionist” - the term used by many European Jewish congregations to refer to Jewish reformers who were creating a schism within the larger Jewish community by forming a congregation which navigated the relationship between tradition and reform independently. In An Attempt to

138 FOOTNOTE FROM MICHAEL MEYERS, GUNThER PLOUT
139 David Woolf Marks, Discourse Delivered at the Consecration of the “West London Synagogue of British Jews,” (London: Duncan & Malcolm, 1842); 1-27. Marks, the first rabbi of the reform congregation in London, dedicated the first sermon in the West London Synagogue, the reform synagogue, to this subject. In it he reminded his congregants that the oral law, while useful, was certainly not divinely inspired. He said, “We know that these books are human compositions and though we are content to accept with reverence from our post-biblical ancestors’ advice and instruction, we cannot unconditionally accept their laws.”
Establish A Secession Synagogue in London Jacob Franklin listed the concessions for which the London reformers were agitating: “The curtailment of the service, - a more convenient hour for its commencement on Sabbaths and festivals, - the introduction of English sermons, - an appropriate choir, - and the abolition of the second days of festivals.”\textsuperscript{140} Franklin reminded readers that all but the last of these alterations had actually been made or was at that time being seriously considered. On the subject of abolishing the second day of festivals Franklin argued that such a change would be tantamount to a revolution in Jewish practice, and that it was “far too formidable to be dealt with by any tribunal now in existence.”

Franklin argued that change was possible, but it had to be done incrementally through appeals to authority. He begged “the small knot of those who threaten secession…. To reflect how much has been already obtained… and how much may yet be attainable… all from authority!”\textsuperscript{141} Such a statement underscores that it was not progress itself to which The Voice of Jacob was opposed so much as hasty progress made by a small faction within the larger group which threatened rabbinical authority and by extension the unity of the congregation. He concluded “Would that our humble appeal might be listened to; then, Israel still one as ever, our columns should be cheerfully lent for the advocacy of all cautious, progressive, authorized improvement.”\textsuperscript{142} This again confirms that the issue of greatest concern to the editors of the paper was division, not change.

\textsuperscript{140} VOJ Volume One, Issue Seven, 24\textsuperscript{th} December 1841, page 51. Despite the fact that the Voice of Jacob characterizes this as an ‘attempt” to establish a reform congregation, subsequent issues make clear that the attempt was successful.

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid.
This example demonstrates the overall manner with which *The Voice of Jacob* dealt with reformers in London. They respected this group, which they believed was acting out of genuine but misguided concern for the health of English Jews. They also had a degree of sympathy for reform itself. Even while the editors wrote that they “unhesitatingly avow a bias for what is established and recognized” they reminded readers that they were not categorically opposed to change.\(^\text{143}\) On the contrary, they intended to advocate for “cautious, progressive, *authorized*” reforms themselves. Progress was permitted and even encouraged if it was derived from authority. This theme would recur and will determine the manner in which editors of the paper related to other Jewish communities around the world. If they perceive that changes were being made hastily, without recourse to the proper authority, they would condemn them.

Consider the fifty-first issue of the paper in which the editors printed and analyzed extracts from an anonymous letter detailing the evolution of the Jewish community in St. Thomas, then under Danish colonial rule.\(^\text{144}\) One of the portions of the letter provided a litany of facts about the congregation, among them the that the rabbi gave sermons in English and that the community did not observe the second day of festivals – the issues which, as explained above, had caused such a stir amongst London Jewry. In London these changes were the cause of much debate and contention, as London Jews did their best to acquire the support of the rabbinic leadership, and then ultimately created a new congregation with their own rabbinical authority; in St. Thomas, the anonymous author demonstrated that the matter of enacting reforms had been handled quite differently. The letter explained that the

\(^{143}\) VOJ Volume One, Issue One, September 1841 page one.

reason the second day of services was discontinued was that so many members of the congregation had already stopped celebrating the second day already, and so there were not enough members of the community in synagogue on the second day to hold services.\textsuperscript{145}

In their analysis of the letter, the editors scold the rabbi of the congregation in St. Thomas for allowing the community to decide, independent of rabbinic authority, to no longer observe the second day of holidays. They write "\textit{He, at least, could attend and If minyan}\textsuperscript{146} be unattainable, there will have been no overt act by one, \textit{whose function it is to maintain the unity of Israel.}" (emphasis added) Here explicitly the editors declare that the objective of rabbinic authority is to keep the Jews unified, and that the ultimate danger of reform is the threat it poses to communal life. It is worth pointing out that they did not express any theological opposition to reform - it appears that they were not worried reforms will cause Jews to stray from God’s path - a fear which seems conspicuously absent. Unity, secured through hierarchy, is their primary concern. According to the editors, that Jewish cohesion was dependent upon communal respect for the executive authority of a religious leader.

Interestingly, this particular congregation considered it worthwhile to write back to the editors and explain that their adherence to tradition was not as tenuous as the paper had made it seem. In the next issue the editors printed a very short extract of a letter from the president of the congregation in St. Thomas which offered a different description of his community’s observance. The editors explain that this letter was provoked by "our remonstrance... against the non-conformist proposal to disregard the

\textsuperscript{145} VOJ Volume One, Issue Fifty-one, 21\textsuperscript{st} July 1843, 206.
\textsuperscript{146} Minyan is the Hebrew term for an assembly of ten adult male Jews, without which a full service cannot be held.
second days of the festivals in this congregation.” In defense of his community, the
president of the St. Thomas synagogue explained, “Several members of the
congregation having informed Mr. Carillon (the minister), of their desire to attend service
on second days of festivals he has determined to attend; and you will be thus gratified.”
The feature is very short and does not include any analysis of the president’s correction.
If, however, we are correct that the editors were most concerned about respect for
rabbinic authority, then this notice would not have assuaged them, despite the
reinstitution of second day observance. The primary concern for the editors of The
Voice of Jacob was how the community determined its practice, which was even more
important than what that practice was. According to them, adherence to traditional
Judaism was primarily dependent on the authority of the rabbis.

Several things can be concluded from this exchange. First, it appears that the
community in St. Thomas considered The Voice of Jacob an important source of
information about world Jewry, as one of its members thought it worthwhile to submit a
description of the congregation to the paper for publication, and the president of the
congregation felt it necessary to defend his community’s practice in its pages as well. It
is also significant that the president wanted to clarify that his congregation did in fact
observe the second day of holidays, which implies that it would have been
embarrassing for the community to be guilty of lax observance. This would indicate that
the Jewish community in St. Thomas shared the editors’ dislike for waning orthodoxy.
However, it appears that the St. Thomas community was less concerned with
maintaining rabbinic authority, a concern which is repeatedly expressed by the editors
of the paper.
Taken altogether, this exchange implies that there was some sense of international Jewish community, and that these two Jewish communities shared common conceptions of what was proper and improper Jewish practice. It also indicates, however, that even those communities which read and respected *The Voice of Jacob* did not have identical relationships with religious reform and tradition. The significance of the difference between respect for rabbinic authority versus respect for tradition can be further appreciated after considering a feature in *The Voice of Jacob* concerning the Jewish community in Charleston, South Carolina.

An article in the fifty-first issue of *The Voice of Jacob* entitled *Fruits of Unauthorized ‘Reforms’* featured excerpts from a thirty-four page pamphlet which detailed the drama that had taken place over the course of the past 50 years between the orthodox and reform factions of the Jewish community in Charleston, and which had been submitted to *The Voice of Jacob* by an anonymous congregant of that community. The editors of the paper printed several excerpts from this pamphlet, interspersed with editorial commentary. This feature documented that the Jewish congregation of South Carolina had begun as an orthodox community in 1791. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the reform faction swelled and by the mid nineteenth century an overwhelming percentage of the congregation was agitating for reform. Questions about whether sermons could be given in English rather than in Hebrew or Yiddish, whether an organ could be played during sabbath services, and whether the holidays could be shortened from two days to one were put to a vote.\(^\text{147}\)

Interestingly, in this instance it was the orthodox members who found themselves in the minority, and “perceiving that neither respect for the constitution nor for the religious conviction of their brethren, nor for the usages of ages, had restrained the innovators”\textsuperscript{148} decided to secede from the congregation. A new constitution was drawn up by the remaining members of the synagogue, with “designs to exclude the orthodox Jews, not only from rights and immunities of membership, but even ‘excluding from the common burial ground of the family of Israel, those who differed from them in conscientious conviction.’”\textsuperscript{149}

At the end of the report, the editors note that “the tables are so remarkably reversed, - in as much that in Charleston, the \textit{soi disant} ‘Reformers’ have been the excluding body, while it is the Orthodox who have been called and treated as ‘the Seceders.’” They go on to point out that the very language that the orthodox in London had used to describe the reformers of their congregation was employed by the Charleston reformers to characterize orthodox Jews in their community. The editors note as well that the reformers were motivated by a desire to keep the community unified, which is why they put the matter to a vote and why they went to such lengths to exclude the orthodox faction from the congregation. In this instance, the editors acknowledge that the proper way to keep the community from schisms was to codify the reforms, as they represented the wishes of the majority of the congregation.\textsuperscript{150} This case demonstrates that the American congregation had developed norms and values of their own. Despite the apparent cultural differences between American and British Jews,

\textsuperscript{148} VOJ Volume two, Issue Fifty-one, 21\textsuperscript{st} July 1841, page 207.
\textsuperscript{149} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{150} In subsequent issues of the paper it becomes clear that the orthodox faction of the Charleston community gained power, and that this feature represents only a short chapter in the history of this struggle. Vide VOJ Volume two, Issue fifty-eight, 27\textsuperscript{th} October 1843, page 19.
a member of the Charleston congregation nonetheless considered *The Voice of Jacob* an organ of sufficient significance that he submitted the pamphlet for publication. The editors of the paper express respect for the reformers in America, which reinforces what we have already demonstrated - that the editors of the paper are dedicated to tradition, to the cohesion of the Jewish community, and to cautious progress, and that these commitments are at times contradictory. Passing judgment on the methods employed by contemporary, foreign Jews chose when grappling with these themes was not a simple task for Jacob Franklin and his coworkers.

German Jewry represented a unique challenge for the editors of *The Voice of Jacob*. A succinct example which demonstrates the complexities of German Jewry, and the complicated perception of German Jews amongst Anglo Jewish contemporaries is provided in the second issue of the paper, in a feature entitled *Judaism in Germany Since the Time of Mendelssohn*. In this feature the editors explain that they have commissioned a “comprehensive and philosophical review” of the history of German Jewry dating from 1760 to the 1842. The editors divide the history of “the progress of modern refinement” on the part of German Jews into four periods: The first was characterized by the “wholesome direction under Mendelssohn’s personal influence during the first period” Next, the ”misdirection by heterogeneous influences” in the second period, bore “the fruits of this erratic tendency from the main principles of our faith towards ‘shallow insipid deism,’ or open apostasy.” The third period, which was in force at the time, was a “rebound now beginning to manifest ... in the resuscitation of
religious feeling, and in the rallying of leading men once more round our sacred institutions, characteristic of the fourth period.”\textsuperscript{151}

The German Jewish community was a dominant presence in the international Jewish community, which is why the editors considered it worthwhile to commission this historical sketch almost immediately after founding \textit{The Voice of Jacob}. This excerpt also indicates that this community was not a monolith, and that it was comprised of reform and traditional elements. Throughout its circulation, the editors of the paper pay disproportionate attention to both spheres of German Jewish life. They reported more about the influential intellectual German Jews than the intellectual Jews of any other community, including their own. Hardly a single issue does not feature some reference to a leading German intellectual Jew, a literary contribution from a member of the German Jewish community, or a report about some event or publication concerning these figures.

To counterbalance the obvious reverence for German Jewish intellectuals, which they encouraged in their readers, the editors were also consistently more dismissive of German reformers than of the reformers of any other Jewish community. In fact, when they choose to express respect for the British reformers they often distinguished them from their German counterparts. Conversely, when they became frustrated with British reformers they compared them to Reformers in Germany. For example, in the thirty-second issue of the paper, in an article entitled \textit{The Authority of Tradition}, the editors address a request, made by one of their readers, to respond to a brochure in circulation at that time in defense of the reform British congregation. The editors first explained that they had refrained from responding to the pamphlet of their own accord because

\footnote{\textsuperscript{151} VOJ Volume one, Issue two, 15\textsuperscript{th} October 1841, page 11.}
the work betrayed that its authors, whom the editors refer to as “scripturalists” were incapable of discussing any matter of reform dispassionately. This introduction signals that in this instance The Voice of Jacob is displeased with the conduct of the British reformers, which contrasts this instance from previous examples in which the editors were careful to express respect for them. They explain that they had considered it irresponsible to enter into a dialogue with the authors of the text in the pages of The Voice of Jacob, though they added that responding, “would not be a difficult [task], since their assertions are scarcely more than an echo of certain statements repeatedly made in Germany.” Contrast this with the following case. In 1844 a group of German reformers published A Manifesto of German Rabbis which advocated for significant reforms. In response to the circulation of that manifesto 77 orthodox rabbis released a formal protest which was submitted to The Voice of Jacob for publication. The protest was published in two installments, the second of which included editorial commentary which provided context about the manifesto for the paper’s readership. The editors acknowledged that this context would needed to be provided for their readers, who were likely ignorant of the circumstances which provoked the 77 rabbis to publish a protest because, “there is happily very little sympathy prevailing among the English communities with the presumed objects of the [German reformers]... though there might

152 The editors point out that Scripturalist is “only a translation of the Hebrew word Caraite.” They refer to the Caraites, a denomination which broke off from mainstream Judaism in the ninth century, denied the Talmudic tradition and considered the Torah itself their only law, and which were dramatically removed from the rest of the Jewish community. The term was employed derogatorily to indicate that the impulses of the reformers, if taken to their logical conclusions, would result in a religious practice as distinct from Judaism as the Caraites were. Encyclopaedia Judaica. Ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik. Vol. 11. 2nd ed. Detroit, MI: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007. p785-800.
154 VOJ Volume four, Issue 101, 6th June 1845, page 169. The article notes that one of the 77 rabbis was the “newly appointed chief rabbi, Dr. N.M. Adler” and also included “Rabbi S.R. Hirsch and B Auerbach, two others of the admitted candidates for our rabbinical chair.” For a description of Hirsch and Adler see chapter one.
perhaps exist, here and there, a disposition to resort to measures having somewhat like
tendencies.\textsuperscript{155}

Recall that in the first issue of the paper Benisch distinguished between the rash
secularization of German Jews and the reactionary traditionalism of Eastern Jewry.
Interestingly, there are no features in the paper which report examples of excessive
Eastern traditionalism, though the subject of excessive reform is discussed in most
issues of the paper. Considering that the editors had ideologically located themselves
equidistant from these two poles, one might have supposed that the two themes would
be given equal attention. Instead, reports about Eastern are most often provoked by
Anti-Semitic hostility. For example, consider the following features: \textit{Scheme for the
Amelioration of the condition of Eastern Jews}, Zechariah Frankel's Letter to Prussian
Minister about the state of Prussian Jews, and Gentile Petitions for a concession of the
rights of Citizenship to the Jews of Rhenish Prussia.\textsuperscript{156} In addition to these full length
articles, the Foreign and Colonial Intelligence section of the paper regularly featured
short blurbs relaying information about traumas sustained by Eastern Jewish
communities. The editors chose to report about Eastern Jews as if the only thing of note
occurring within their communities were communal emergencies.

It is difficult to answer the question “Where did the editors of \textit{The Voice of Jacob}
stand on the question of reform?” Their stance was not simple. Historians who mention
the paper characterize it in contradictory terms. For example, David Cesarani, author of

\textsuperscript{155} VOJ Volume four, Issue 101, 6\textsuperscript{th} June 1845, page 169.
\textsuperscript{156} VOJ Volume one, Issue four, 12\textsuperscript{th} November 1841, page 31; VOJ Volume one, Issue fifty-one, 21\textsuperscript{st} July
1841, page 208.-- in this letter the German Jewish intellectual Zechariah Frankel urges the Prussian
minister to lessen the civil disabilities of the Prussian Jewish community; VOJ Volume one, Issue Fifty-
four, 1\textsuperscript{st} September 1843, page 226.
The Jewish Chronicle and Anglo Jewry, described the paper as “Franklin’s zealous organ”. Cesarani demonstrated Franklin’s opposition to reform by quoting a passage in the paper in which the editor mocked The Jewish Chronicle for defending the reform congregation. In his essay Contrasting Christian influences upon the origins of Reform and Liberal Judaism in England, however, Daniel Langton describes The Voice of Jacob as a progressive publication which “reflected the congregation’s desire to conform to what in Victorian Christian circles would have been regarded as the decorum appropriate for more spiritual worship.” Both of these authors, and others, quote from the paper itself to prove that their respective characterizations of the paper’s orientation were accurate. Each of these scholars can each find evidence for their representation of Franklin’s political and social stances in The Voice of Jacob.

This chapter sought to demonstrate the Jacob Franklin modeled a nuanced, learned editorial philosophy. His paper is difficult to categorize because he and his coeditors were trying to navigate complex questions without recourse to a single institution or subculture. The paper they produced is a product of learned, progressive, Jews who were dealing seriously with the philosophical challenges of their day.

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158 VOJ Volume one, Issue thirty, 7th October 1842, page 37. Franklin referred to the Jewish Chronicle as the “fortnightly publication of the Reform Synagogue.”
159 Daniel Langton, A Question of Backbone, 1-47.
Compared to countries in Central and Eastern Europe at the start of the modern period, England was a bastion of liberalism. Despite this, anti-Jewish sentiment was expressed in England at this time, though it was far less dramatic than in neighboring countries. The term anti-Semitism applies even to expressions of prejudice against Jews that are nonviolent. For this reason, English distaste for alien cultures which motivated contempt for Jews during the nineteenth century, and the violent repression or destruction of Jewish life in other parts of contemporary Europe were both manifestations of anti-Semitism despite the obvious differences between the two.\footnote{Todd Endelman, \textit{The Jews of Britain 1656 to 2000} (California, 2002), 2.}

English Jews were at once shielded from the horrific degradations Jews in other countries endured, and subjected to English cultural prejudices that, though relatively mild, were nonetheless betrayals of the progressivism and tolerance to which England aspired. The editors of \textit{The Voice of Jacob} sought to understand this dynamic. In order to use the privileges at their disposal to defend Jews in other parts of the world, they needed to be aware of the complicated Jewish-Christian dynamics in England.

\textit{The Voice of Jacob} vowed to combat all expressions of anti-Semitism.\footnote{VOJ Volume One, Issue One, September 1841, page one.} In England the primary expression of this prejudice was a sort ubiquitous, subtle prejudice, which was difficult to identify, let alone to condemn. Even on occasions when this prejudice became manifest, Jewish Englishmen were slow to admit that they were
discriminated against. This is true for various reasons. For one, they knew that English anti-Semitism was far less dangerous than most others, and they did not wish to appear ungrateful. Second, English intolerance for alien culture was a fundamental characteristic of English society. Were the Jewish Press to identify that prejudice and condemn it, it could be interpreted as public acknowledgment their own exclusion from English culture. This, they feared, would only inflame anti-Jewish prejudice. In addition to the imprudence of such a policy, English Jews prided themselves upon the access England granted them to larger society. To the degree that they were in fact excluded from it, they considered this exclusion an embarrassment, and did their best to ignore it. *The Voice of Jacob* had to combat English anti-Semitism with subtlety.

One force which motivated Christian behavior towards Jews and which the editors of *The Voice of Jacob* considered it their duty to combat was missionizing. Specifically, the missionary work of the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity Among the Jews (hereafter the Society) - “the world’s largest organization devoted exclusively to evangelizing Jews.” Members of the Society professed a deep love for the Jewish tradition and attributed their missionizing work to that love. Interestingly, condemnations of the Society were as frequent in the paper as condemnations of the violent anti-Semitism rampant in other parts of Europe. The editors felt compelled to defend the Jews against both of these threats. These threats also proved useful in some ways for the English Jews. Both served as a means of strengthening Jewish identity by reminding Jews that, despite the tensions within their community (primarily in response to the incubation of reform), they were all unified against external threats.163

These threats also offered Jacob Franklin the opportunity to demonstrate that there were Christians who shared Jewish concerns about anti-Semitism and about the Society’s treatment of Jews. *The Voice of Jacob* printed articles, written by prominent Christians in England, condemning conversionists and hostile anti-Semitism. These works demonstrated that English culture was not incompatible with philo-Semitism. This editorial decision was one of the subtle ways that Franklin combatted English anti-Semitism.

The Society was founded in 1809 by Joseph Samuel Christian Frederick Frey, a Jewish convert to Christianity. It quickly became a powerful body. Members of the Society included archbishops of Canterbury, members of Parliament, and, most famous of all, the Duke of Kent. At first the Society identified assisting the Jewish poor as its primary aim, and the conversion of Jews to Christianity as a secondary purpose. Despite this articulation, their primary concern was conversion, charity was simply a means to an end. Focusing on the poor was a clever strategy about which Frey wrote in 1808 “It is chiefly amongst this class of Jews i.e. the poor and ignorant we must look for success at first and there is no doubt but afterwards, some of the rich, the wise and mighty will listen to the joyous sound.” The society’s goal, then, was to find poor Jews, provide them with material goods, education, and livelihoods in order to condition these Jews’ complete dependence on The Society. In return it expected them to accept

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165 The father of future Queen Victoria.
166 Meirovich, *Ashkenazic Reactions to the Conversionists*, 7.
Jesus and reject the Jewish tradition. The society’s minute books, now held at the
Bodleian Library in Oxford, assiduously record all of the organization’s efforts to inspire
conversion. The amount of money paid to each Jew every year, the installment of new
leadership in the society’s schools for Jewish children, testimonies from proctors about
how the Jewish students behaved, and how well the students scored on exams are all
included in the archives.167

Some of the Society’s members were concerned that their organization
disrespected Christianity by, in effect, paying Jews to feign Christian faith. B.R.
Goakman, a printer for the Society, complained that Jews only accepted Jesus so they
“could get a good belly-full of victuals.”168 Despite these scruples, the Society grew in
power and popularity throughout the beginning of the nineteenth century.169

Just before The Voice of Jacob commenced operations, a number of events increased
public interest in the Society’s activities. The president of the Society, Anthony Ashley
Cooper (later Lord Shaftesbury)170 published an essay in The Quarterly
Review, a leading English periodical, which argued for resettling the Jews in Palestine.
This was the first time an influential politician had made this argument.171 Dynamics in
the Middle East had resulted in a surge of interest in Palestine. In the 1820s the Society

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167 Papers of the Church’s Ministry Among the Jews, A.5, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford
168 VOJ Volume two, Issue 37, 6th January 1843, page 90.
169 Michael Darby, Emergence of the Hebrew Christian Movement in Nineteenth Century Britain (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 95.
170 Anthony Ashley Cooper, born in Grosvenor Square, London, in 1801, was the Seventh earl of
Shaftesbury. He was elected to Parliament in 1826. He was the most powerful advocate in England for
the restoration of the Jews to Palestine, which he believed was a necessary prerequisite for the second
171 Operative from 1809 to 1967. Founded by George Canning, Robert Southey and Sir Walter Scott in
opposition to the Whig Edinburgh Review. “QR History,” Jonathan Cutmore, Conservatism and the
RULES
FOR THE DIRECTION OF THE SCHOOLS, AND
THE GENERAL MANAGEMENT THEREOF.

L. — That the Schools shall be under the clerical
superintendence of the Chaplain.

II. — That neither the Matron, Schoolmaster, nor
Governess shall absent themselves without the consent
of the Chaplain, except upon occasion of taking the
children out to exercise, or on the half holidays allowed
to them once a-fortnight.

III. — That upon all occasions when immediate advice
be required, reference shall be made to the Chaplain.

IV. — That all matters relating to the Schools shall pass through the Sub-Committee, and through it
be reported to the General Committee, at their next
Meeting.

V. — That there shall be a Quarterly Examination of
the Hebrew Children, before the General Committee,
to which Subscribers may be admitted, on the first
Tuesday of January, April, July, and October, at one
o'clock.

VI. — That there shall be a gathering of the Boys and
Girls who may have been educated in the Schools, on
two separate occasions, in the months of May or June
in each year. That upon these occasions some Prelate or Dignitary of the Church shall be invited to
attend, and take the chair: that upon these occasions
rewards due to the children for good conduct in their
respective situation, shall be distributed in the presence
of the children assembled.

VII. — That tea and refreshments shall be provided
upon these occasions.

VIII. — That the Rewards shall be

FOR BOYS.
First Year... £0 5 0
Second do... 0 10 0
Third do... 0 15 0
Fourth do... £1 0 0
Sewenth Year ......... £2 0 0
A moiety of the reward to be paid at the end of each
year, at the time specified in Rule VI.; the other
moieties, together with the final reward, when the
apprenticeship is completed.

FOR GIRLS.
First Year... £0 5 0
Second do... 0 10 0
Third do... 0 15 0
Fourth do... £1 0 0
And 1/2 for every subsequent year, provided the Girls
do not change their situations, in which case the re-
wards to recommence with 5s., and increase according
to the above rule.

IX. — That a book shall be kept at each School, under
the direction of the Chaplain, in which the
Master and Governess shall keep a record of the
daily proceedings of the School; of their attendance
at Chapel, and that of the children; of their absence
from the School; of the admission of children; of the
absence of children on any special occasion, and the
cause; together with any other particulars that the
Chaplain may consider desirable. Such book is to
be kept at all times open to the inspection of the

X. — That the children may be visited by their
friends on the first Wednesday in each month, between
the hours of Two and Four in the afternoon, in the
presence of the Master, Matron, or Mistress; each
friends shall not remain, at the utmost, more than half
an hour; but at no other time, without a written order
from the Chaplain or one of the Secretaries. No cakes,
fruit, or other kinds of food, shall be given by them
to the children. And if in any instance those friends
behave improperly to the Master, Matron, or Mistress,
or give encouragement to the children to disobe[y their
authority, each friends shall not be permitted to see the
children, until their conduct has been reported to the
General Committee, and permission to visit again
granted to them.

XI. — That all persons visiting the School shall on
their entrance inscribe their names in the Visiting-
Book, to be kept at each School; and that no strangers
be allowed to visit the Schools on Saturday.

XII. — That nothing contained in the foregoing, or in
the following Rules and Regulations, shall be con-
strued as interfering in any way with any existing By-
Law of the Society, excepting the difference in terms, as
applied to Matron and Governess by these present
Rules and Regulations.

RULES FOR THE MATRON.

XIII. — That the Matron shall have the entire sup-
tendance of the domestic concerns of the Schools.
initiated a mission in there, in 1838 Britain established a consulate in Jerusalem, where a bishopric was established in 1840. Throughout these developments, political negotiations were underway between England and the Ottoman Sultan in Constantinople. A treaty designed to bring peace to the Middle East was signed by representatives of the Ottoman Empire, Great Britain, Russia, Austria and Prussia in London in July of 1840. These changes were if not precipitated, then at least accelerated by another event which had occurred in the spring of 1840.

In February a monk named Father Thomas and his servant, Ibrahim Amara, went missing in Damascus. Thirteen prominent Syrian Jews were subsequently arrested on suspicion of ritually murdering the missing men. The French Consul at Damascus ordered that thirteen Jews be tortured in prison. Four of these Jews were tortured to death while Christians pillaged a nearby synagogue. Word about this event, the Damascus Affair, ignited European interest in the Jewish Question. Jews in Europe, astonished that credence was still lent to claims of ritual murder, rallied together to support Damascan Jewry. Jews around the world sought to demonstrate that they together wielded sufficient power to protect one another. The event intensified a sense

174 Blood libel cases like this one were common in Europe for hundreds of years beginning with in England in 1144. From the twelfth through the seventeenth century Jews were often accused of kidnapping and murdering a young Christian boy and using his blood for ritual purposes (usually the accusation was that Jews needed Christian blood to make matza a kind of cracker eaten on the holiday of Passover). As Central and the Eastern Europe modernized, these accusations became less frequent. The ones that did surface did not match the established pattern, for example The Damascus Affair concerned to adult men, not a Christian child. Frankel, The Damascus Affair, 29-30.
of mutual responsibility within the international Jewish community. In Europe, the Damascus affair “evolved into a struggle for public opinion.” It captivated international attention: “the most respectable newspapers in England, France and Germany assigned it endless space.” Allies of the Jews, like Christian Hebraists and millenarians, considered the affair an opportunity to prove their support.

As mentioned, the men who ran The Society were concerned with Jewish welfare. They were horrified by the Ottoman authorities’ decree to torture the Damascans Jews to death. These men considered themselves champions of Jewish rights, and the organization “placed itself at the forefront of the campaign to protect Damascans Jews.” In his comprehensive study of The Damascus Affair Jonathan Frankel proposes that the “large increase in membership and income of The Society during the year was, after all, directly attributable to the upsurge of interest in the Jewish people” which the Damascus Affair had inspired.

Alexander McCaul, one of the most celebrated members of the Society, drafted an influential and widely circulated defense of Damascans Jewry. He convened a

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175 Mevorah. *Effects of the Damascus Affair on the Jewish press*, 65. For more on the influence of the Damascus affair on world Jewry, see the introduction.

176 Ibid, 9.

177 Ibid, 1.

178 The most important allies who interceded on the Damascans Jewry’s account were the Rothschilds. (Frankel, 85) For more about the Rothschilds see footnote check in chapter one.

179 Frankel, *The Damascus Affair*, 212.

180 Ibid.

181 Alexander McCaul was one of the most profound intellectual and political leader of the Society. He was scholar of Hebrew and of the Jewish tradition. Born in Dublin in 1799, McCaul was educated in Dublin and Oxford before developing an interest in Judaism. He was sent by The Society to Warsaw as a missionary 1821, and there he became conversant in Hebrew and Yiddish. He was devoted to the study of Jewish texts, even while criticizing the rabbinical authority and the Talmud. His relationship with Judaism was complex: he exerted enormous effort to understand it and its practitioners even while fulfilling his role as a missionary. Throughout his life he published works defending Jews and Judaism, while also condemning rabbinical authority. David Ruderman, “Towards a Preliminary Portrait of an Evangelical Missionary to the Jews: The Many Faces of Alexander McCaul (1799-1863). *Jewish Historical Studies*, 47. (2015) 48-69.
meeting at which fifty-nine former Jews signed a statement in which they unequivocally denied that the Jewish religion required or condoned ritual murder.\textsuperscript{182} McCaul’s defense had a powerful impact because of the celebrity of its author, and because of its persuasiveness. This group of former Jews, comprised of men from countries across Europe, had indisputable credibility: each had intimate knowledge of the Jewish tradition, so they could speak with authority about its rituals. None had anything to gain from defending Jews or any reason to fear if Jews were left helpless: “they were witnesses who would gain nothing by giving this testimony and lose nothing by testifying to the contrary if their conscience allowed them.”\textsuperscript{183} Because of all of these forces, The Society gained respect and power precisely when the \textit{Voice of Jacob} was founded. This was no coincidence. From 1841 to 1846 the number of Jewish periodicals throughout the world doubled in response to the Damascus Affair.\textsuperscript{184} Franklin, was motivated by that incident as well.”\textsuperscript{185}

A glance at \textit{The Voice of Jacob} would show that Franklin was provoked as much by the Society as he was by The Damascus Affair. The Society appears, directly or indirectly, in almost every single issue of \textit{The Voice of Jacob}. In the first article of the first issue, Franklin lists several subjects which he intends to address routinely in his pages. One of these was “Explanations of Prophecy, Defence, &C” and beneath this

\begin{footnotes}
\item[182] Alexander McCaul, \textit{Reasons for Believing that the Charge Lately Revived against the Jewish People is a baseless Falsehood} (London: B. Wertheim, 1840), 45.
\item[183] Meirovich, \textit{Ashkenazic Reactions to the Conversionists}, 101.
\item[184] Mevorah “The Effects of the Damascus Affair on the Jewish Press in the Years 1840-1846” [Hebrew], 46. In this essay Mevorah argues that, despite the fact that 1844-1846 saw heated debate amongst Jewish communities on the subject of reform, these communities remained unified when it came to dangers that affected the entire Jewish community - in particular from 1844-1846 when it came to the fate of Russian Jews “

\begin{quote}
既能透过托马斯·齐克的论著来了解1844年，又能透过托马斯·齐克的论著来了解1847年，
\end{quote}

\item[185] Frankel, \textit{The Damascus Affair}, 405.
\end{footnotes}
heading Franklin made clear that he intended to dedicate space in the newspaper to discourses on Scripture, not because he believed a Jewish organ should deal with biblical exegesis, as may have been supposed, but because the machinations of The Society rendered this necessary:

That the perverted constructions of Scripture are sought to be forced upon the less informed of our brethren, is a matter of daily observation. Have we not found the poor and ignorant cajoled into entrusting their infants to persons specially employed to engraft hostility to the Jewish religion on their tender minds? In short, are we not constantly assailed on all sides by those who hold themselves conscientiously justified in resorting to the most unscrupulous expedients, in order to lead us from the faith of our fathers? \(^{186}\)

In many subsequent issues Franklin again refers to the “perverted constructions of scripture.” \(^{187}\) The conclusion of Franklin’s first article is equally elucidating. He adds,

This defence we can, and ought to employ, without attacking the religion of our assailants, for such is neither our duty nor our interest. We are enjoined not to seek to make our neighbors proselytes, and God forbid that we should make them infidels. \(^{188}\)

From the start, even while calling upon his readers to combat the missionaries, Franklin is careful to point out that, though the efforts of The Society are motivated by Christian faith, condemning Christianity would be an improper response. Perhaps Franklin was careful to distinguish between The Society’s Christianity and Christianity in general because, as a citizen of a Christian country, it was the prudent course. Whatever the reason, *The Voice of Jacob* remained consistent on this point. Even in instances when he explicitly identified and condemned the Society, an editor always added some sentiment of solidarity with or respect for the Christian faith. In the seventh issue of the

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\(^{186}\) VOJ Volume One, Issue One, September 1841, page two.

\(^{187}\) This is mentioned in a number of issues including: Volume One, Issue twelve, 4\(^{th}\) March 1842 page 90; Volume One, Issue fifteen, 15\(^{th}\) April 1842, page 115; Volume One, Issue seventeen, 13\(^{th}\) May 1842, page 130; Volume One, Issue Twenty, 24\(^{th}\) June 1842, page 154; Volume Two, Issue Twenty-six, 9\(^{th}\) September 1842, page 2.

\(^{188}\) Ibid.
paper, for example, the anonymous column *Decoys to Apostasy* relayed the experiences of a Jew who had fallen into The Society’s hands. The article provides insight into how the Society functioned as well as into Franklin’s editorial choices:

From this man’s own confession, the origin of his confession, the origin of his connexion with the Society was a flagrant violation of religious and moral propriety, which lost him the countenance of the Jews; after which, applying for charity to a benevolent Christian, he was referred to a certain Reverend doctor, holding office in the Converting Society, which undertook to give the man and his family a regular weekly maintenance, provided that he would lend himself to his purposes.\(^{189}\)

According to the article, the man continued to accept The Society’s salary until he was instructed to accompany a bishop on a mission to Jerusalem. This, evidently, was too great a betrayal of his Jewish origins, and he “gave the Society the slip a few days since.”\(^{190}\) The author concluded the column by entreat ing Christian readers to direct their missionizing efforts towards those with no knowledge of the Judeo-Christian religion, rather than trying to convert Jews. He implored: “they can at least teach a knowledge of God, where He is *altogether* unknown, and we Jews will aid them, as we are bound to aid, even though ours will not be the creed which is to be taught.”\(^{191}\) Even in this column, in which the methods of The Society are explicitly described in the fullest and most unflattering light, the editor is careful to end with an invitation to work together to spread biblical religion!\(^{192}\) Franklin was both firm and cautious.

\(^{189}\) VOJ Volume One, Issue Seven, 24\(^{th}\) December 1841, page 50.
\(^{190}\) Ibid.
\(^{191}\) Ibid.
\(^{192}\) For other articles that repeat this sentiment in *The Voice of Jacob* see Volume Two, issue 39, *Proceedings of the Conversionists* which distinguishes between good Christians who donate money to Jewish poor out of genuine good feeling, and bad Christians who donate to Jewish poor in order to bribe them to convert; and see Volume Two, Issue 40 *Legitimate Objects of Christian Missions* which provides a description of Mormonism and then implores Christian missionaries to proselytize Mormons rather than Jews. There are many other instances, these are just two succinct examples.
Another of Franklin’s strategies was to publish Christian condemnations of The Society’s attempts to convert Jews. This editorial practice was progressive for a conservative Jewish publication, among which it was uncommon to publish non-Jews.\footnote{This practice was uncommon but not unheard of - for other examples of Christians in the Anglo Jewish Press see David Ruderman “The Intellectual and Spiritual Journey of Stanislaus Hoga: From Judaism to Christianity to Hebrew Christianity” (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017) 41-53 In which Ruderman explains that the fact that certain Christians were routinely published in the Anglo Jewish Press “belies the assumption that only Jews were invited to write in the Jewish press, even on matters of great theological controversy between Jews and Christians[,]” (48) The fact that this point needed to be made, however, indicates that the practice was unusual.} This method allowed Franklin to denounce the Society without placing himself and his community in opposition to general English Protestantism. It intimated that, if Christian Englishmen rejected the Society, then English Jews were no less English for rejecting it as well.

The Christian writer Franklin featured most frequently was Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, a novelist who served as editor in chief of The Christian Lady’s Magazine from 1834 to 1846, of The Protestant Annual in 1840, and The Protestant Magazine from 1841 to 1846. Tonna was a prolific writer and influential social reformer.\footnote{For other instances in which Charlotte Elizabeth is referred to or quoted in The Voice of Jacob, Cf Chine (an Extract from a letter to Ms. Tonna) Volume One Issue 34; Fringes and Phylacteries Volume One, Issue 37; Gentle Opinion of the Synagogue Volume Two, Issue 48; Christian Lady’s Magazine Volume Three, Issue 57; and for the multipage obituary Jacob Franklin wrote at her passing see Volume Five, Issue 134, 31st July 1846, page 174.} One of the many subjects upon which she wrote was the mistreatment of the Jews. In her novel, Judah’s Lion, she professed the belief that Jews would only achieve salvation if they accepted Jesus as their lord and savior, however, she later chose to focus energy on advocating for Jewish political rights rather than agitating for their conversion to Christianity. In 1844, for example, she presented a petition signed by many of her powerful acquaintances to Tsar Nicholas I, advocating for the “oppressed and burdened
Jewish Subjects.”195 Because of her interest in defending Jews from violence and harassment, and her intellectual acumen and reputation, Franklin considered her a learned and powerful ally.

In Improving the State of Christian Feeling Towards the Jews196 the editors of The Voice of Jacob cited an article written and published by Tonna in the May 1843 issue of The Christian Lady’s Magazine in which she responded to criticism from fellow Christians. Specifically, the article was a rebuttal to the accusation levied against her by the Bishop of Jerusalem that “her honestly stated opinions are ‘a little too judaizing’ she says, ‘It is not a good phrase, seeing that we do not propose to Judaize the Gentiles; we only protest the erroneous plan of Gentilizing the Jews.” The editors continued to quote at length from her article, in which she explained that there were certain customs which, according to both Christian and Jewish scriptural laws, Jews alone were required to practice. She identified these practices and argued that they were established as eternal laws in the Old Testament. According to Tonna’s interpretation, it was consistent with Christianity to allow the Jews to practice their tradition freely. She declared that she would “rejoice while Israel kept [these practices] holy, instead of making their discontinuance a badge of Christianity.” It was safer for Tonna to express these religious arguments against conversion than for the editors of The Voice of Jacob to do. They could, however, quote her in their pages, thus amplifying the argument without risk of inciting Christian accusations of hostility towards the church. The editors conclude, “will [the Bishop of Jerusalem] shew either the ability or the moral courage to answer the

196 VOJ Volume Two, Issue 46, For more on this incident see page 21 of this chapter.
challenge of a woman, armed strongly in honesty? -- *Nons Verrons*.”¹⁹⁷ It was a progressive, iconoclastic editorial decision to publish Tonna’s work since it was unusual for Jewish periodicals to publish either a woman or a Christian.¹⁹⁸

Although Tonna was *The Voice of Jacob*’s most frequently published and cited Christian correspondent, she was not the one who was most knowledgeable about the Jewish faith. John Oxlee, the Rector of Molesworth, was a philologist, theologian and a self-taught scholar of Jewish texts.¹⁹⁹ A lengthy review of his work *The Letters to the Archbishop of Canterbury, on the inexpediency and futility of any attempt to convert the Jews to the Christian Faith*, spanned three issues of *The Voice of Jacob*.²⁰⁰ The review featured long excerpts from the Oxlee’s book in which he corroborated Tonna’s argument that neither the Jewish nor Christian faith required the Jews to convert to

¹⁹⁷ VOJ Volume one, Issue Forty-six, 12th May 1843, page 166.
¹⁹⁸ Tonna is not the only woman Franklin publishes in his pages. Grace Aguilar, a poet, playwright, novelist, liturgist, theologian and social reformer, was among the only Jewish women writers of her time anywhere. Michael Galchinsky, *Grace Aguilar Selected Writings*. (Broadview Literary Texts, 2003) 1-47. She was published for the first time in *The Voice of Jacob*. See Volume One, Issue 14 *Shmah Yisrael The Spirit of Judaism*; Volume One, Issue Eleven *A Poet’s Dying Hymn*; Volume One, Issue Fifteen *Bring Flowers, and Excerpts from Miss Aguilar’s Book “The Faith of Israel”*; Volume Two, Issue 39 *The Chamber of Dying*. Despite this support, Franklin still expressed prejudiced. In editorial introductions to Aguilar’s *The Spirit of Judaism* he wrote that he did not believe “a Jewish woman’s pen could make as important contribution to Anglo-Jewish self-understanding as a Jewish man’s.”
¹⁹⁹ David Ruderman, “The Christian Opponents of McCaul and the London Society: John Oxlee and Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna” unpublished essay. I am very grateful to David Ruderman for sharing his work in progress with me. It provided necessary context about Oxlee and Tonna and enriched my understanding of their lives and their relationship with the Jews. John Oxlee was born in Yorkshire in 1779. He demonstrated at a young age a remarkable capacity for learning languages - he is said to have mastered 120 languages by the time of his death in 1854. Among these languages was Aramaic, the language of The Talmud. After becoming rector of Molesworth in 1836, Oxlee devoted a good deal of time to the study Jewish Law. Because Oxlee was an autodidact of the Jewish tradition, he came to many unique interpretations of Judaism which set him apart from both Christian and Jewish scholars. For example, Oxlee insisted that the Rabbis were aware of the trinity, and often referred to the three godheads in the Talmud. In his many controversial pamphlets, Oxlee amazed Christian Jewish scholars alike by quoting extensively and correctly from ancient and modern Jewish sources. He was a contributor to the *anti-Jacobin Review, Valpy’s Classical Journal, the Christian Remembrancer, The Voice of Israel, The Jewish Chronicle, The Jewish Repository, The Yorkshireman, Sermons for Sundays and Festivals*, as well as *The Voice of Jacob*. Boase, G. C. 2009 "Oxlee, John (1779–1854), philologist and writer on theology." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 26 Nov. 2018.
²⁰⁰ VOJ Volume One, Issues Forty-three, 31st March 1843, page 138; Volume One, Forty-four, 14th April 1843, page 146; and Volume One, Forty-five, 28th April 1843, page 154.
Christianity.\textsuperscript{201} He, too, was free to make the argument on behalf of the Jews in stronger language than the editors would have been able to use in their own defense:

How can it have happened, that, for sixteen or seventeen centuries in succession, the continued efforts of the Church to dissipate [the Jews'] unbelief, and to bring them to an open acknowledgment of Jesus, as their Messiah, should so signally failed to make the least impression on them? There must be some earthly cause, and that cause, I hesitate not to say, is the bigotry and unauthorised presumption of the Christian Church, in demanding that the sons of Jacob, before they can become Christians, should cease to be Jews; that they should abandon the Law of Moses, in order to embrace the gospel.\textsuperscript{202}

Franklin and his fellow editors would have been hesitant to so argue that God protected the Jews from having to accept Christianity. It was safer, and probably more effective, to allow Oxlee to make that argument for them.

Oxlee had originally sent his book to the editors of \textit{The Jewish Intelligence}, the Society’s official organ, but “the Editor of the ‘Jewish Intelligence’ and the committee of the Society whose organ it is have refused to insert... even an advertisement of his publication.” It is striking that, after being rejected by the Society’s publication, it occurred to Oxlee to submit his book for review to \textit{The Voice of Jacob}. This is worthy of note not only because he was a Christian but also because the piece was directed towards Christians. Oxlee must have known that \textit{The Voice of Jacob} had Christian readership, indeed, the editors refer the piece to their “Christian readers.”\textsuperscript{203} They add that the fact that the Society refused to acknowledge Oxlee’s arguments “does not surprise us, especially after reading these powerful arguments, with which the Conversionists could not even hope to grapple, with any chance of success.” In the same piece the editors explained that they were willing to engage in theological

\textsuperscript{201} This was not a common view. As already stated, millenarianism was a popular view.
\textsuperscript{202} VOJ Volume One, Issues Forty-three, 31\textsuperscript{st} March 1843, page 139.
\textsuperscript{203} Ibid.
discourse with any Christian who earnestly hoped such conversation would “lead to the
discovery and manifestation of truth”\(^\text{204}\) rather than engaging Jews in conversation for
the sole purpose of proselytizing them. This is an example of the editors emphasizing
their respect for the Christian faith, even while condemning “conversionists.”

Considering the amount of space and energy Franklin devoted to responses to
the Society, one might expect that it posed a substantial threat to English Jewry. While it
was true that they had influential, powerful members the Society did not actually
succeed in converting many Jews. According to historian Mel Scult, many asked what
the society actually did, aside from raise money and publicize itself.\(^\text{205}\) The Anglican
clergyman H.H. Norris published an exhaustive work on The Society which was meant
to prove that its primary purpose was self-perpetuation.\(^\text{206}\) Between 1809 and 1817, the
Society managed to convert about fifteen Jews a year. Despite the enormous effort they
devoted to their cause, “they had to face the fact… that the number of conversions
which they themselves made were few.”\(^\text{207}\) Fervor amongst Christians for evangelizing
Jews, however, did not cool simply because Jews were difficult to convert. By 1829 The
Society had inspired the establishment of many other societies devoted to missionizing
Jews. The work of The Society was significant, then, because it was representative of a
popular impulse amongst many powerful Christians during this period.

During this period, nearly everyone in England knew there were Jews throughout
the world who were suffering at the hands of other Christian powers. Franklin did not

\(^{204}\) VJO Volume One, Issues Forty-three, 31\(^{st}\) March 1843, page 138.

\(^{205}\) Mel Scult, “English Missions to the Jews - Conversion in the Age of Emancipation” Jewish Social
Studies, no. 35 (1973) 3-17.

\(^{206}\) Henry Hendley Norris, The Origin, Progress, & existing circumstances, of the London society for

\(^{207}\) Scult, The English Mission to the Jews, 10.
shrink from pointing out that those English Christians who professed concern for the state of the Jews chose to devote energy to converting the Jews in London rather than helping Jews elsewhere. He made this point explicitly, writing “the melancholy condition of millions of our brethren… must be a matter of the deepest concern to every breast in which a human heart throbs… millions of our people are left to suffer the most cruel treatment, and that too in the midst of nations boasting to profess a religion the most philanthropic!” He insisted that the degradation of the Jews throughout Europe was a systemic problem, which any decent person would feel compelled to mitigate. He argued that England, which had a history of championing progressive causes, should undertake a leading role in this project. Instead, however, he lamented:

England is already pre-eminent in her zeal to aid the Jews. it is true, that zeal has hitherto been chiefly manifested in a form which would destroy our identity, and which has revolted our religious feelings…. There is an awakening perception of the true tendency of the former errors of these would be friends of Israel; -- it remains only for the Jews themselves to step forth, and, by appealing to the experience, to the reason of their philanthropic neighbours, divert their pious energies into wholesome and acceptable channels.208

Franklin felt a sense of responsibility towards Jews in other countries. He reported on their mistreatment in part to inspire the English to honor their own values by defending foreign Jews, as well as to inform English Jews of the conditions endured by their fellow Jews.

As mentioned, the Damascus trauma reinforced a sense of mutual responsibility amongst Jews around the world. At this time, there was no organization devoted to international Jewry. The only tool Jews could use to manufacture a global identity was the press.209 *The Voice of Jacob* led this effort.210 Beginning in 1842, every time a new

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Jewish journal was established anywhere in the world, *The Voice of Jacob* would announce that there was “another link in the chain.” The effort was a response to a deadly anti-Semitism, very different from the soft prejudice familiar to the Jews in England.

Throughout the seven years *The Voice of Jacob* was in circulation it featured constant reports about the horrific conditions of Jewish communities in other parts of the world. Most often these appeared in short features in the Foreign and Colonial Intelligence section of the paper - hardly a single issue does not feature some report lamenting the conditions endured by Jews in other parts of the world. Occasionally longer articles were dedicated to these themes. Among these longer reports, there were a few that seemed to shock and enrage the editors of the paper. A brief study of three such examples will demonstrate the sort of hostility endured by Jews abroad, and the editorial choices Franklin made in response to them.

In January, 1843 the first article of the paper, *The Jews in Austria*, discussed a newly published work, written by a Christian historian named Kurtz, “making the most extraordinary revelations concerning the policy of Austria towards her 700,000 Jewish subjects.” The conditions that this report described were so egregious that the editors claimed they would have trouble believing them were it not so obvious that the author of the work had witnessed them with his own eyes. According to the report, after the

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211 Because these are so frequent it is impossible to offer an exhaustive list of such instances. For representative examples from each year of Franklin’s editorship vide Volume One, Issue three *Persecution of the Jews in the Levant* Volume Two, Issue 39 *Russian Jews*; Volume Three, Issue 64 *Constantinople*: Volume Four, Issue 107 *Swiss Intolerance*; Volume Five, Issue 119 *Bosnia*.
213 VOJ Volume Two, Issue Thirty-eight 20th January 1843, page 104.
massacre of the Austrian Jewish community in 1420, the Jews were readmitted under horrific conditions which remained in place at the time the report was drafted. The editors divide the injustices committed against Austrian Jews into three categories. First, Jews suffered, “deprivation of various rights of citizenship.” Second, crippling taxes were imposed upon them “beyond those paid by others.” They offer the tax in Galicia on every light that a Jew uses on the Sabbath evening as an example. According the report, if the Jew in question is too poor to burn a light, the authorities confiscate his furniture for the tax. The third category was comprised of “the contempt associated with these oppressions.” For instance, there are “various cases in which the testimony of a Jew against a Christian is invalid, although the converse is quite legal.”

The report also informs readers that there are places in which “Jews are restricted to certain localities, sometimes to districts called Jewries; there are cities in which they are not permitted to pass the night in others, for instance, Vienna, even a foreign Jew must buy a leave-ticket for a fortnight (It can only be renewed twice). In Moravia, especially, only a given number of Jews are permitted to have existence. The eldest sons only of certain privileged families are permitted to marry: the rest must die off.” While these descriptions are harrowing, the author conceded that they were among the least offensive injustices committed against the Jews. If they were to divulge “the sickening details, however authenticated, ordinary readers would be incredulous.214

It is clear from the accompanying editorial commentary that the editors were certain the account would shock readers. It is surprising and noteworthy, therefore, that the editors were quick to point out that oppressing Jewish subjects was not a fiscally responsible policy. Modern readers will consider the conclusion of the article, though not

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214 Ibid.
as disturbing as the details of Austrian Jewish persecution, surprising given the progressive English context in which the paper was written. The editors assured readers that the Jews in Austria were not an economic burden: “it may be proved by statistical returns, that the most thriving districts are those from which the activity and enterprise of the Jews are not excluded.” It seems as if the editors felt compelled to persuade readers that the oppression from which these Jews suffered was not financially warranted.

These assurances, while disconcerting, make sense. Roughly fifty percent of London Jewry was impoverished at the time the article was written. The editors, it appears, wanted readers to know that the Austrian government had not been provoked to punish the Jews for being a financial burden. They went on to accuse the Austrian government of committing “flagrant injustice”, but only after repeating several times that the Austrian Jews were powerful and wealthy, and that only mischief would befall Austria for alienating “so powerful, so enterprising a people.” Not all reports about violence against Jews betrayed hints that the editors of the paper had internalized English anti-Semitism, but it is worth noting that this instance suggests they did. In a progressive context devoid of prejudice, the inhumanity of the Austrian policy would have been clear.

Another example of anti-Semitism to which The Voice of Jacob dedicated particular attention was the Ancona Decree which was first addressed in Issue 53 of the first volume of the paper. The editors reported that the inquisitor general of Ancona had drafted a decree against the Jews in the papal states. This decree was a revival of an

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215 Ibid.
217 VOJ Volume Two, Issue Thirty-eight 20th January 1843, page 103.
obsolete decree which had first been put into effect in 1775, suspended, then reinstated again in 1827.

The decree heavily regulated Christian-Jewish relationships. It mandated that two months after the decree was instated “the Jews are to dismiss all Christian servants, wet nurses, and apprentices, and are at no time to receive assistance of any kind from Christians.” It required that Jews sell or give up “all property outside the Jewry (Ghetto)” within three months. Jews were prohibited from doing working anywhere where other Jews were not employed. They could not eat with Christians outside the ghetto, they could not sleep outside the ghetto, and they could not be “entertained in a Christian house.” Jews were forbidden from providing a Christian with a place to sleep inside the ghetto, or “from employing Christian journeymen therein.” They could not visit or hold “friendly intercourse with Christian families.” If Jews wanted to travel outside the ghetto, they needed a license to do so.

Jews were utterly prohibited “to deal in books of whatever nature.” They could not read, keep prohibited books or wear ecclesiastical robes. If they possessed ecclesiastical robes or books, they were required to deliver them to Holy Office. Finally. “Ceremonies, torches, and psalm-singing, are interdicted at Jewish funerals, under penalty of 100 scudi, and corporal punishment of the next of kin.” The Jewish wardens at Ancona were required to have the decree read in all synagogues.

The editors conclude this report by asking, “cannot the sympathy of our Christian neighbours here, be made available for something more than the gratification of our local self-love?” and then referring their Christian readers to Duties of the Friends of
In Issue 44 of the paper, in which the editors implore true philo-Semites to defend foreign Jews rather than convert local ones.

Three Issues later, the second article in the issue announced that the decree had been suspended. The editors congratulated the efforts of Jews and Christians alike, “the utmost consternation had been produced, not only throughout Italy, but everywhere in the Mediterranean; not only among the Jews, but among Protestant Christians.” They also named and thanked the secular English newspapers, including the *Morning Herald*, the *Sun*, and the *Ipswich Express*, which had voiced support for the Jews of Ancona. The article concludes by affirming the power of the public press to effect change. It is worth quoting this section of the article, since it sheds light on how *The Voice of Jacob* understood the power of the press, and relays information about other contemporary examples of oppression which the editors considered it their responsibility to mitigate:

Did not public opinion save the Jews of Damascus? Has not public indignation been instrumental, in at least suspending the Inquisition’s decree? Might not public sympathy arrest those immeasurably worse oppressions - the Russia Ukase\textsuperscript{218}, now expatriating half a million of Jews - the Moravian cruelties, recently perpetrated in the name of the law, on Jewish wives and mothers, for daring to marry and increase in obedience to the laws of God and nature?\textsuperscript{219}

In response to the Ancona decree, Franklin was empowered to call upon his Christian neighbors directly to take action. As demonstrated in the Austrian example, he did not always feel empowered to respond so forcefully.

Another example, mentioned in the citation from this last article, offers insight into why the editors exercised caution in these cases. “The Russian Ukase incident” is a reference to decrees issued by Prince Paskewicz of Poland, which shook “the welfare of

\textsuperscript{219} VOJ Volume Three, Issue Fifty-six, 29\textsuperscript{th} September 1843, page 1.
the Jews to the foundation.”

The Prince prohibited the Jews from “living in Christian streets… Jews are declared especially subject to military conscription from their 12th year of age.”

In response to this inhumane decree which endangered the lives of so many Jewish children “hundreds of individuals, children, women, and men… have eluded the execution of so inhuman a law, by flight over the frontier.” The facts of the case, copied, with intermittent commentary, from the Zeitung des Judenthums first appeared in The Voice of Jacob in February, 1843.

Apparently, the editors had heard rumors about the harsh decrees before that time, but they did not print any word of it till they were certain the reports were true. They only printed notice about the case after the German papers reported that they had received private letters which confirmed “the intelligence given by public prints” after which they could no longer doubt the veracity of the claims.

The editors of The Voice of Jacob were correct to be cautious. They suspected, it seems, that if they reported too quickly the Jewish community would be judged harshly by their Christian readership. It appears, however, that there were elements of English Christian society which would judge Franklin and his paper harshly whether he was cautious or not.

Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, who read about the Ukase incident in The Voice of Jacob, issued a report about it in her own paper. In response to this report she received a letter, the tone of which is as elucidating as its content.

As the editor of the “Voice of Jacob” has at least, although with an extremely bad grace, been obliged to back out of the interested and for a great

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221 Ibid.
222 The Jewish newspapers around the world borrowed extensively from one another’s reports about Jewish communities in places without their own press. The German Jewish papers were trusted with reports about Jews in Russia and the far east, since they were closer to them, just as The Voice of Jacob was trusted to report about Jewish communities in the English colonies.
part fabricated statements he had repeatedly blazoned forth, respecting the *expatriation of millions of Jews* on the borders of Russia, (which appear also to have misled yourself), I trust you will also in the next number of the “Christian Lady’s Magazine,” do the act of justice to correct the mistake into which you have led your readers, by repeatedly taking the “Voice of Jacob” as your authority, and spreading his falsehoods, countenanced by your respectable and esteemed name.\(^{224}\)

Tonna responded to the letter, dated 8 December, first by quoting from the 26 November issue of the *Morning Herald* which corroborated the account given by *The Voice of Jacob* about the Russian Ukase. She went on to accuse the anonymous writer of this letter of “private ill-will against the Jewish nation in general, or individually against the Jew who nobly stands for to plead the cause in the face of the world.” Tonna took the opportunity to praise Franklin at length for doing his best to aid the Jews in other countries. She noted that, “The Jews in England enjoy privileges and advantages, not within their grasp in other lands.”\(^{225}\) Because of these comfortable conditions, she said, many English Jews “lose sight of their peculiar position, as ‘a people that shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations,’” Franklin, however, recognized that it was his responsibility, because of the privileges he enjoyed, to defend the Jews in other parts of the world, therefore,

at a great sacrifice of property, of time, of ease, and in fact of all that can gratify the selfish principle, he takes up a prominent position. He establishes, at vast expense no doubt, a line of communication… accumulating information that, but for him, would never reach us; and dragging into the light of day atrocities hitherto perpetrated in darkness against the defenceless Jew…. For this deed, and for having the manly candor and openness faithfully recorded whatever reached him of a more encouraging aspect, the editor of *the Voice of Jacob* [is] charged with blazoning forth ‘interested, and for a great part fabricated statements…. Whatsoever of respectability or esteem may attach to the very humble name of Charlotte Elizabeth, we bless God for leading us freely to enlist it in the cause of His own ancient people; and to throw it into the antagonist scale

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\(^{224}\) Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna *The Christian Lady’s Magazine*, 66.

\(^{225}\) Ibid. 68.
of that which is heaped with prejudice - we will not say malignity - against them.  

Tonna’s letter offers a valuable perspective on the complicated circumstances which the editors of *The Voice of Jacob* had to consider. First, as English Jews, they knew that they had privileges that their fellow Jews in other countries did not have, and they considered it their responsibility to use those privileges in service to their fellow Jews. They also knew, however, that there was anti-Semitism in England, albeit of a different variety. They were confident that English anti-Semitism would not lead to violence, but it would compel certain Christian readers to cast doubt on *The Voice of Jacob*’s reports. As has been demonstrated, the editors were well aware that Christians read their pages. They also knew that not all of these Christians were as willing to believe and support them as Charlotte Elizabeth was.

The editors had to be very careful, for the sake of the English Jews and for the sake of Jews throughout Europe. The urgency and gravity of their position was not fabricated - the editors were correct to believe that their work had the potential to do great good, and their silence could be deadly. Charlotte Elizabeth had said herself that, were it not for *The Voice of Jacob*, news of the violence perpetrated against the Jews in other countries would never reach England. The editors knew this, but they also knew that if their reports were too hasty, if they reported too quickly, or spoke too harshly, they would inflame English neighbors disposed to think the worst of them. The potential that this lurking English anti-Semitism had to do damage was very real. The Jews in London did not seem to fear that they would ever suffer violence at English hands, but discrediting the reports given by the Jewish press jeopardized the power they had to

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226 Ibid.
help the Jews in the rest of the world. As Franklin had pointed out, public opinion was very powerful. It had the power to save Jews, and it had the power to convince the English public that there were no Jews to save - and so, effectively, to sentence them to suffering.

There were many different types of hostilities against Jews. When Franklin undertook his role as editor, he became responsible for understanding these complicated Jewish-Christian dynamics. He had to know, for example, that there were Christian conversionists who would defend Jews against violence but would bribe poor Jews to abandon Judaism. When they were bribing poor Jews they were a threat, but when they issued statements in defense of the Damascene Jews, they were allies. Franklin had to understand that, just as Franklin would have been responsible for identifying Christians like Charlotte Elizabeth and John Oxlee who had been independently moved to defend the Jews against their own fellow Christians. The editors of the paper had to develop careful strategies for communicating with these allies. They would have had to demonstrate respect and gratitude without appearing obsequious, and they would have had to be vigilant about the Jewish community’s response to these relationships. *The Voice of Jacob* was, after all, a Jewish organ. The editors had to be careful that they did not alienate the Jews while working to win the respect of the Christians. Perhaps most importantly, Franklin needed to understand that there was an anonymous crowd of English Christians who certainly would not attack or rob a Jew, but who might read Jewish papers with undue skepticism and disregard rumors about the violence Jews sustained in other parts of the world. *The Voice of Jacob* needed to be able to convince that group of its worth.
*The Voice of Jacob* needed to consider the sensitivities, prejudices, cultural contexts and knowledge of all of its readerships whenever it published anything. The capacity to navigate these issues was essential when reporting information about anti-Semitism abroad. It was not enough for them to be accurate, they also needed to be convincing, firm, and, perhaps most importantly, inoffensive.
Conclusion

“A New Link in the Chain”

The community that is preserved in *The Voice of Jacob* struggled with primary questions while living ordinary lives. Studying the testimonies it left behind provides a full, complicated sense of the spirit and tone of English Jews in the mid nineteenth century. They are not a unified voice. In historical studies, the impulse to reduce a period or a group to a particular, consistent ethos is powerful, but it must be resisted. History is not primarily composed of a series of brilliant writers and brave swordsmen. Prejudice does not begin or end in violent outbursts or in hateful documents. Any study of history that restricts itself to dramatic instances will be incomplete.

The ideas that characterize an age are important, but the means by which those ideas were circulated are equally relevant. One of the hallmarks of modern Judaism is the media with which it transmitted its ideas. An analysis of the radical impact of the press on contemporary thought would be unoriginal; declarations about the uniquely disruptive nature of newspapers have been made before.227 The introduction of the press into Jewish life, and then into Jewish life in England, however, was its own communications revolution. It introduced a new kind of information and a new relationship with information and made those new forms of knowledge a fundamental part of a full Jewish education.

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227For further analysis on this subject see Mitchell Stephens, *A History of the News* (New York: Oxford University Press).
There is a Jewish proverb which states that all of Israel is responsible for one another (Kol Yisrael areivim zeh Bazeh). Franklin considered the press a technological tool to honor that dictum. The Voice of Jacob was the first English language Jewish newspaper. It introduced that disruptive and enriching technology to a new community. Of course, that community already read both Jewish newspapers in other languages, and secular English newspapers. Still, while the German and French Jewish models, and the British secular ones existed before The Voice of Jacob, Franklin’s paper was an important innovation. It played a formative role in how English Jews would harness the press, how the press would change their culture, and how their participation would affect the dynamic of global Jewish journalism.

Franklin’s decision to consolidate analyses of Jewish texts, aggregations of foreign and domestic news, essays about contemporary issues, and advertisements dealing with quotidian details of English Jewish life within a single organ changed the way that his readers related to these branches of information. A careful reader of the paper will gain a sense of the human characters who contributed to and produced the paper. Creative religious innovations, like Franklin and Benisch’s proposals for the establishment of a modern-day Sanhedrin (the highest rabbinical court in Ancient Jerusalem) appear in the same issue as an essay about proper behavior for Christian friends of Jews. A few pages later, a young poetess named Rachel was assured that her verses were “very creditable to so young an aspirant...but she cannot yet expect to

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228 Masechet Shavuot, 39a:22.
229 In this instance disruptive simply means that it altered the status quo, the connotation is not negative.
write sufficiently well for the public eye." Franklin insisted that all of these types of content belonged in a single publication. Communication like this, For the Jewish community in the English language, simply did not exist before.

The gravity of Franklin's editorial choices is compounded when one considers that what Franklin chose to publish influenced Christian conceptions of Judaism, as well as Jewish self-definition. The apologetic dimension of the paper was fundamental. During the period in which the paper was circulated, the most esteemed authorities on the subject of Jewish history and tradition in the general world were Christians. Christians Hebraists like Alexander McCaul and John Oxlee were awarded chairs of University departments dedicated to the study of Judaism - not just the study of Hebrew, as in earlier periods. *The Jewish Monthly Intelligence*, the official newspaper of the Society established by Joseph Frey in 1835, published information about local and international Jewish communities. If a Christian had a question about Judaism or Jews, they would typically turn to a Christian for the answer. *The Voice of Jacob* hoped to replace or, at least, supplement these sources of knowledge.

The self-assurance and integrity required to make that decision must be taken into account. While it is true that *The Voice of Jacob* attests to the insecurities and frustrations of contemporary Jewish life in England, its form affirms that the Jews were

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230 VOJ Volume Three, Issue Forty-Four 14th April 1843, page 148. The idea of establishing a Sanhedrin makes sense and is consistent with Franklin's complicated stance on reform. A Sanhedrin would have the power to change tradition without threatening the status of rabbinical authority.


232 For example, in VOJ Volume Two, Issue Thirty-One 14th October 1842 page 48. an article entitled *How to Destroy Anti-Jewish Prejudices* proposed that “the several excellent publications of modern times, which throw so much light on Jews and Judaism, would (if made more accessible to Christians, and placed within the reach of their observation) remove many grievous prejudices, and destroy those erroneous opinions which so frequently prevail among Christians with respect to Jews and Judaism[.]”
certain they could command Christian respect. Perhaps the editors could only hope to influence a particular Christian demographic, but they were certainly effective in influencing that subgroup: Charlotte Elizabeth described *The Voice of Jacob* as “The only printed paper... in this country, that supplies any real, authentic intelligence concerning the Nation of Judah.”233 This at a time when, due to a confluence of social and political forces, interest in the Jews was high.234

The social and political conditions at this time are significant for another reason. Modernity changed things. Jews across the globe suddenly had far less in common with one another. The press provided them with a tool to create some sort of global identity. *The Voice of Jacob* in particular insisted that this new media could be used as a tool for unification. After gaining entry into a network of German, and French newspapers, *The Voice of Jacob* dedicated itself in part to expanding that network. In its pages its congratulated world Jewry every time a new Jewish newspaper, a “new link the chain” was established. Even as a proud citizen of England, Jacob Franklin considered it paramount that Jews around the world study and support one another. He believed that, when it came to anti-Jewish prejudice, Jews must depend, first and always, on each other.

In an age such as ours, in which we are inundated by media and in which people actually describe media as the primary gateway to reality, it requires a leap of the imagination to understand what Jewish life (what any life) was like before information was plentiful, and commentary was ubiquitous. The well-informed citizen is a modern invention. When it became possible to widely proliferate facts there developed an

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234 For more on this subject, see chapter one.
appetite for intelligence and a more ambitious need to be informed. As consumers of media, the readers and contributors to *The Voice of Jacob* are some of our earliest ancestors. It requires distancing oneself from one’s context to consider how the means of transmission influence one’s relationship with what is transmitted. A study of this paper broaches fundamental questions about the responsibilities and consequences of journalism, and about its impact on individual and collective identity.
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